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FREE SPEECH

Here's To Duty-free Holidays—In Britain

I've come to the conclusion that the biggest attraction of a Continental holiday is being able to return home with a cheap bottle of brandy and two hundred duty-free cigarettes. The meals in our own British hotels have improved tremendously, so foreign cooking isn't the draw; and two or three disastrous summers have proved that crossing the Channel isn't necessarily a passport to sunshine.

So to keep more of the holiday trade at home I suggest that every taxpayer gets, along with his April tax return, a token entitling him, on presentation of a holiday hotel bill, to two hundred tax-free cigarettes and a bottle of liqueur—with the compliments of H.M. Customs.

I'm sure many people would find a new charm in Britain if this were done.

A. STEPHENSON, NORWICH.

* * *

No Yolk

As I work in a café I have cooked many thousands of eggs in my time, and seen many double-yolked eggs. But recently I came across something I had never seen before—an egg without any yolk at all.

Have such eggs ever been seen before? And if they have, how do they come to be laid?

A. CAUSER, WATERY LANE, BIRMINGHAM, 9.

"It's a rare freak," says a poultry expert. "The hen is fooled by a foreign body, perhaps tissue, in its laying organs. It mistakes it for a yolk and covers it in 'white.' It happens with young pullets, and with hens after a period of heavy laying."

* * *

Watchmen At Work

On many building sites these days firms are providing platforms for the public, so that we can indulge—in comfort—our traditional liking for watching other people work.

This isn't just stupid extravagance, nor is it public-spirited generosity. For the trifling cost of a platform the firm gets a horde of unpaid foremen—for no workman is likely to laze under the critical gaze of a host of eyes.

Perhaps we could extend the idea. Why not have public galleries in factories, and free stands in the shipyards?

ARTHUR MILES, BOWEN DRIVE, DULWICH, LONDON

* * *

Nightmare Wait

Why cannot hospitals provide special waiting-rooms for mothers with young children? Recently I took my two-year-old son for a 9.30 a.m. appointment—and it was 12.30 before we could leave. The intervening hours were a nightmare for me as I tried to keep my child quiet—yet a nursery would have eased the strain on both me and the other patients who had to wait.

There must be many mothers like me who shirk a hospital visit when they themselves need treatment, rather than face that awful wait with the children.

MRS. M. CLARK, FINLAY STREET, LONDON, S.W.6.

* * *

One Law For The Taxman . . .

As I was buying a £3,500 bungalow I rejoiced at the Budget news that all houses costing under £4,000 were to be freed of stamp duty. It would save me £17, I thought—for nothing

Continued on page 4

You'll enjoy picnics more with P.K. It tastes so good, lasts so long, costs so little.

Good to Chew and Good for You!

E174/8

FREE SPEECH

continued from page 3

was said by the Chancellor about the cuts not coming into force immediately.

Much to my surprise I was told by my solicitor that I would have to pay the full amount—the cuts didn't start until August 1 and I was buying the bungalow in June.

When a tax—such as petrol or purchase tax—is *imposed* by the Chancellor, it applies immediately, on the day of the Budget. Surely it is unjust, and sharp practice, for a government department to treat the taxpayer in a different way from that in which it treats itself.

THE REV. E. M. COX, SOUTH PICKENHAM RECTORY, SWAFFHAM, NORFOLK.

Black Mark

If, as we are led to believe, great care is given to the setting and marking of General Certificate of Education examination papers, why are the results not given in detail as they were in the days of School Certificate—pass, credit and distinction?

Surely the old method provided students with greater incentive to work hard, and also gave employers a better idea of the candidates' ability.

As a parent, I should be interested to know why the old method was abolished—and whether it is likely to be resumed.

E. O., LIVERPOOL.

Jack Longland, the broadcaster and Derbyshire's director of education, says: "A pass at G.C.E. 'O' level is about equal to the old credit. The brilliant pupil, who before would have got distinctions, can now by-pass 'O' level and go straight on to take some subjects at Advanced standard. But there is strong pressure to re-introduce a distinction mark—and I, personally, would welcome it.

"For the pupil who fails G.C.E. but might have got passes at School Certificate level, there is a move to hold a new, easier exam. Some authorities are experimenting with this."

House Of Murder

I was very interested in your article about the Buck Ruxton murder case ("The Famous Cases of Sir Hartley Shawcross," June 7), as I visited Lancaster Assize Court on holiday recently and several names in the article were mentioned by our guide.

In Dalton Square our coach driver pointed out the house in which Ruxton used to live. It was up for sale—and hasn't been lived in since the murder.

H. APPLEYARD, SANDHURST PLACE, LEEDS, 8.

The murders were in 1935, and though the house has not been lived in since, it has been used as business premises for some of the time.

Gymslip Of A Girl

I do wish people would stop treating sixth-formers as "school kids." At eighteen I'm not a child, I'm a young woman. Yet, when I'm wearing school uniform, cheeky little shop assistants aged only fifteen ignore me to serve other customers first—and to crown it all they call me "pet."

In buses, men give up their seats to girls much younger than I, even when they aren't carrying any luggage. I get on with my hockey bag and

heavy satchel and not a man moves; yet they do when I'm out of uniform.

Bus conductors take liberties, such as pilfering things from my pockets and parading them in front of the whole bus. Protests—whether in fun or serious—are of no avail.

It's always the same reply: "You're just a school kid."

EILEEN DIXON, WITTON GILBERT, DURHAM.

Off The Rails

Some time ago the railways announced their new saviour of the rural branch lines—the light, economical diesel "railbus." When it was tested on a little-used line the number of passengers increased fourfold.

But now it is planned to close nearly twenty such lines—the railbuses aren't yet available, and the economies have to be made now.

Surely this is a short-sighted policy—to stifle the railways for money so much that they have to close lines that could, in the future, sustain a railbus service at a profit.

DAVID REED, MUIRHEAD AVENUE, LIVERPOOL, 13.

"We don't decide to close a line until we are sure that it would be uneconomical to use it even with railbuses," say British Railways.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

ODD, isn't it, that with all the contemporary hubbub about open plan and split level, the ancestral hall is still a big attraction? Posterity might have to ponder long to find a reason for the popularity of this British weekend pastime, but you don't have to be a historian to read the minds of the cover family. Here's Critchlow's verdict: Father—"Very nice, but think of the rates." Mother—"Lovely, but all that cleaning. . . ." And the youngsters—"Never mind the mansion; we'll just settle for a fourpenny cornet!"

This Other Vow

How can anyone say that any couple wish for a church marriage "for purely social reasons"? Nobody can see into another's heart and mind.

If "a vow once broken is valueless," how does Mrs. Myfanwy Hope ("Free Speech," June 21) regard the promise given in Confirmation (an equally solemn vow to that at marriage), which because we are frail and human we so often break? Would she not encourage the breaker of *this* vow to "try again"?

That such intolerant judgments are made surely shows that something is very wrong with orthodox Christianity.

MRS. M. McMULLEN, FAIRWARP, UCKFIELD, SUSSEX

The Confirmation vow is a renewal of the baptismal promises—to "renounce the devil and all his works" and to keep God's laws.

Have Your Fill

Why do dentists keep on filling a child's teeth with temporary fillings instead of pulling the teeth out? My child has had one tooth filled eight times, each time having to go through the agony of toothache.

These "baby" teeth can't last for ever. Can't I insist that the dentist pull them out?

MRS. M. S., MORECAMBE, LANCS.

"No, you can't insist," says a dental expert. "You can change your dentist, of course, but the next one you go to will probably say exactly the same: milk teeth should be kept as long as possible—they guide the second teeth."

JOHN BULL pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the JOHN BULL Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post.

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ILLUSTRATED BY FANCETT

DOUBLE and QUITS

by CLIVE BURNLEY

VERY infrequently people who are not identical twins look as if they were; they are doubles. I have only once met the situation myself and an extraordinary affair it was; that was before the first World War in the parish of Fitzeppington Maltravers in the Croxbourne valley.

A gentleman named Roger Lamette arranged through solicitors to take a seven-year lease of a house called Penfold which belonged to the largest local landowner, Sir Roderick Upcott-Blake of Fitzeppington Hall. Mr. Lamette's arrival in the village caused a sensation: he appeared to be indistinguishable from Sir Roderick.

It was not that the two men had faces of a particularly common cast, or of a vague and featureless nature. On the contrary, they were rather the kind of countenances which would impress themselves on the memory—broad-browed, well keeled by good noses, weighted by somewhat pugnacious chins; and like as two peas. It was thought that Mr. Lamette was perhaps a quarter of an inch shorter than Sir Roderick, that his voice was a little deeper; apart from these minor differences, as very little had been heard about fingerprints at that

Now the duel was at its height. Sir Roderick had chosen his weapons—a seat in the

time, nobody in Fitzeppington Maltravers could suggest any certain means of distinguishing between the two.

A number of embarrassing complications at once arose. Sir Roderick was puzzled by the outrageous way in which his friends and acquaintances began to lie, stoutly maintaining that they had seen him in places to which he had not been and even in those to which he would never go, such as the public bar of the Golden Ball.

Sir Roderick was a powerful man locally and, as nobody rushes to carry bad news to any sort of dictator, it was some time before he was aware of the situation. At last it burst upon him with a paralysing shock. One morning he turned a corner and came face to face with himself.

"Hey!" he exclaimed. "Who the devil are you?"

"My name," answered his other self coolly, "is Lamette. And what the hell's yours?"

"You're impertinent," said Sir Roderick.

"And so are you, sir," answered Lamette. "Excuse me, I'm in a hurry. If there is anything you wish to say to me please write for an appointment. I live at Penfold."

"Not for long, you won't," said the baronet.

Mr. Lamette moved off down the street with the air of a man who has urgent business to attend to and entered the Golden Ball.

Now Sir Roderick knew the worst. In his first anger he dismissed the agent who had let Penfold, but this was so manifestly unfair that he had to re-engage him the following day. Unfortunately the lease he had concluded with Lamette was one that could not be terminated, except by agreement, for seven years. Obviously, agreement would have to be reached.

It was therefore finally arranged by Sir Roderick's underlings that Lamette should come to Fitzeppington Hall for an interview. Sir Roderick received him in the Chinese Room.

"Last time we met," said Sir Roderick, offering a cigar, "I was short with you. It was a mistake. I admit it."

"Thank you."

"After all," went on the baronet, "we're not children. We're men of the world. We can discuss this thing quite frankly. And the first question is—what's your game?"

"Oh, cricket chiefly," said Lamette. "I used to be a rowing man, but——"

"I mean," said Sir Roderick, colouring a little, "why did you come to this district at all?"

"Simply because I liked it."

"One can believe in coincidence only just so far," said Sir Roderick. "Didn't you come here because of *me*?"

"To be quite frank with you," said Lamette, "in a way, I did. You see, for years some of my friends who move in high society had been telling me I looked exactly like Roddy Upcott-Blake. Naturally I grew interested in the fellow."

"So I interest you, do I?" growled Sir Roderick, dangerously red in the face.

"Very much," agreed Lamette. "The proper study of mankind is man, you know, and the first part of that study is oneself. But it's difficult to study oneself; you can't get far enough away to take a dispassionate view. Whereas if one can observe an exact replica of oneself——"

"Now don't trifle with me!" said Sir Roderick, enraged at being spoken of as if he were only a clever reproduction of a popular original. "You came to this village because you knew your presence would annoy and embarrass me. Very well. . . . How much do you want?"

"You insult me, Sir Roderick. I am not any kind of blackmailer."

"Very well," said Sir Roderick. "Suppose I take your word for that. Let me simply say then that, as one gentleman to another, I should esteem it a very great personal favour if you would undertake to leave this district, and that I'm very willing to reimburse you handsomely for any expenses you may incur doing so."

"That's certainly more polite," said Lamette. "Unfortunately I regard the question as one of principle. To be blunt with you, no consideration whatever would induce me to leave Penfold. None whatever."

"Lamette," said Sir Roderick, breathing hard, "you'll be sorry for this."

"So it's war, is it?"

"To the death!" said Sir Roderick passionately.

Lamette left Fitzeppington Hall shortly afterwards. No doubt he was expected to walk back the way he had come. But it occurred to him that he might not have many other opportunities of inspecting Sir Roderick's extensive and carefully tended grounds.

It was on the bridge over the ornamental water that he encountered the girl in the lemon-coloured dress. She approached him with a particularly tender smile and held up her face to be kissed. Lamette raised his hat and obliged.

"I was hoping you'd come out and join me," said the girl—a very attractive girl. "It's such a heavenly morning. Did you see that awful man?"

"Yes," said Mr. Lamette. "The man I saw was rather awful, in his way."

"You sound hoarse," said the girl. "You've been smoking too many cigars again." But now a look of wild alarm came suddenly into her blue eyes. "You're not Roderick!" she cried. "You must be *that* man!"

"Ah," said Lamette, "only the eye of true love could discover the perfect deception. Sir Roderick must be a very happy man."

"You—you kissed me!"

"Madam," said Lamette, "the one thing worse than kissing a lady by stealth is apologizing for it afterwards."

"Roderick will thrash you."

"If he and I started fighting, nobody would know which was which until it was all over. But you know which is which, don't you? *How* did you know?"

"It was the voice. And something about the eyes. . . ."

"The eyes," said Lamette, "yes. It has been said that, while Sir Roderick's merely pierce people, mine have been known to twinkle. Not that I take credit for that. After all, laughter is my business."

"How do you mean?"

"I'm a playwright," he explained. "Should you ever desire to see my current farce, now in its third week at the Jubility, I shall be delighted to offer your party the best position in the house."

"But you don't seem to realize your position," said the girl. "If I were to call that gardener rolling the path over there, what do you suppose would happen?"

"Let's find out," said Lamette. He walked to the end of the bridge and called to the man. "You, there! Find some work to do somewhere else, will you?"

The gardener touched his cap. "Very good, Sir Roderick," he said, moving away.

The girl could not help laughing.

Alicia Freemantle—that was her name—did not report this incident to Sir Roderick when she saw him a little later. But she did say: "This man who looks like you, Roderick: they tell me he writes plays. He wrote that new farce at the Jubility that everyone's talking about."

"I thought as much," said Sir Roderick. "A play-actor. A rogue and a vagabond."

"I shouldn't take it too seriously," the girl suggested. "I don't suppose he does. Why don't you play him at his own game?"

Alicia left Sir Roderick deep in thought.

For some weeks thereafter the men did not cross paths, and local gossip became even more imaginative when it became known that they had not parted on friendly terms. It was now generally accepted that Lamette had a claim upon the Upcott-Blake estates, and that sooner or later the two men would in some way come to grips.

When they did, it was not at all as any of the villagers had foreseen. At mid-morning one Friday Sir Roderick turned in at the gate of Penfold, and knocked on its door.

A surprised Lamette took him into his drawing-room and gave him a glass of brandy. The baronet's manner puzzled him. It was not exactly hostile; neither was it quite straightforward.

"Lamette," said the baronet, "I've something to tell you."

"I can't guess what it is. Unless, of course, that, as I won't leave Penfold, you've decided to leave the Hall."

"The idea had occurred to me," admitted Sir Roderick, "but, as Upcott-Blakes have been at Fitzeppington for six hundred years, it seemed a rather drastic measure. . . . No, Lamette. The fact is, I have a sort of confession to make. A day or so ago—on Tuesday to be exact—I regret to say that I was involved in a brawl. To be frank, I wasn't entirely sober. Do you know I actually poured a glass of champagne down a man's neck and threatened to thrash him?"

"Both indecorous and wasteful," said Lamette. "But why do you tell me about it?"

"I'm not really certain," answered Sir Roderick thoughtfully. "I think I've changed my views about you. Quite suddenly, quite recently; only this morning, in fact. I find I have quite a childish urge to confide in you. After all, talking to you is like talking to myself."

"I know exactly what you mean."

"So I must tell you this undignified story. It was a disgusting business, Lamette. Pouring the champagne was only part of it. I dare say the police are looking for me at this moment."

"Very distressing," said his host. "But now I see what you're really after. For the first time our remarkable similarity in appearance might be of some use to you. You want me to provide you with an alibi for Tuesday."

"My dear Lamette," said Sir Roderick, "you must have a criminal mind. I'd never thought of that. It's a generous offer."

"If you accepted it, you might not think so."

Sir Roderick frowned suspiciously. "What do you mean?"

"Last Tuesday," said Lamette, moving back as he spoke to the other side of the room so that the octagonal table was between them, "you went to Limberhurst in a hired automobile. The Freemantles were delighted to see you. After lunch you played croquet with Alicia and her mother and the Harrisons and you all had tea together on the terrace. In the evening you drove Alicia down to the river; it was idyllic there in the moonlight. A very romantic setting. How could you possibly have a stronger alibi than that? Half a dozen people who know you very well will cheerfully swear to it."

Sir Roderick, crimson and sweating with rage, had leaped to his feet. "I'll—I'll kill you for this!" he shouted. "You utter swine, Lamette. To impersonate me with my fiancée and——"

"Not with her. Oh, no. She's one of the very few people who can tell us apart. The others couldn't, though. But calm yourself, please. Didn't you ask me for an alibi?"

"That any man could sink so low as——"

"You forget," said Lamette, "the last time we

stalls, a splash of champagne . . . and a beautiful girl

met it was to be war. War is one of the two things in which everything is fair. With Alicia I'm concerned with the other thing as well."

"If you think——"

"Please listen to me," said Lamette, "not to your injured pride. You know very well you've neglected Alicia, and you know why. There is one difference between us: you're just that degree noisier and bigger than I am. Alicia's not flamboyant enough for you. It was just a good family match, but your heart wasn't in it. Neither was hers, thank heaven."

Sir Roderick sat down again, reached for the brandy bottle, poured himself a generous measure and drank it smartly. "Lamette," he said, "you're a scoundrel. You ought to be hanged. But you're right."

"Ah," murmured Lamette with relief, in turn helping himself to the brandy and sitting down. "I didn't actually think you would kill me; it would have been too like suicide. But you had to know sometime. And, it's an ill wind—after all, it's a good alibi."

SIR RODERICK'S good humour returned with amazing suddenness and he chuckled. "But I don't want an alibi," he said. "Dear me, no."

"But the brawl—the police. . . ."

"Oh that," said Sir Roderick thoughtfully, "yes—look here, Lamette, you were good enough to tell me what I was doing last Tuesday. Now I'll tell you what *you* did."

"What *I* did?"

"You had an eventful afternoon," said the baronet. "You went to a performance at the theatre. Surprised everyone a bit, because they thought it was one of your country days. And that wasn't the only thing that surprised 'em."

"Sir Roderick! You didn't. . . ."

"I'm telling you what *you* did. Of course you were a little drunk, but that's not really any excuse for that little incident in the bar. That was when you poured the champagne; the collar it went down belonged to that critic from the *Echo*—man with a ginger beard. Then you pushed him down and had to be physically restrained from actually stamping him into the floor. While you were in the mood, you took the opportunity of telling one or two other people just what you thought of them. Barry Hyman's going to walk out unless he receives your apology before Monday. Tom Cresco went straight round to his solicitors. It was a massacre."

"By God!" cried Lamette, very white. "You mean. . . ."

"I mean," said Sir Roderick, "that I played you at your own game. Alicia suggested it, a long time ago, when she was on my side. After all, my dear chap, war's war, you know."

"But this!" said the playwright. "To ruin a man's whole career! I never did anything to you like this."

"No; you only stole my girl. Broke up what might have been a very happy marriage."

"Rubbish," said Lamette, "I did nothing of the sort. . . . You know," he said, with a change of tone, "you terrified me for a moment. I almost believed you. But of course it's just a joke—you wouldn't know anything about the play or the theatre. You couldn't have done it."

"You underestimate me," said Sir Roderick. "As a soldier I rely very greatly upon information. Espionage, if you like. When I decided that, if I couldn't get you out of my backyard, I'd go and raise merry hell in yours, I cast about for information. I was extremely fortunate. I was able to meet somebody who is actually playing at the Jubility. At first she simply wouldn't believe I wasn't you."

"But who . . . ?"

"I took her to Corsani's and the Boldavia and one or two other places," said Sir Roderick. "Told her the whole story. Told her my deep-laid plot. The way she entered into the spirit of the thing! She was right by my elbow the whole time prompting me. And laughing her head off. What a day!"

"But for God's sake, who was it?"

"I know she was christened Henriette Rowbotham," said Sir Roderick belligerently, "so don't tell me. I prefer her stage name—Jessica Vallette."

"Oh, no!" cried Lamette, in anguish. "Not Jessy! After all I've done for that girl! Didn't I discover her when she. . . ."

"I shall always be eternally grateful," said the baronet, "to anyone who discovered Jessica. A wonderful creature!"

"But you don't know what you've done to me," said Lamette. "I'll never live it down. I'm ruined, absolutely ruined. The *Echo* of all papers! And Barry. . . ."

"*C'est la guerre*," said Sir Roderick. "But perhaps the honours are about even. Would you consider a truce?"

"It's too late. I'm——"

"Don't be so damned pessimistic," said the baronet. "I'll grant generous peace terms. I'll even re-establish your reputation. Oh yes, it's perfectly simple. All I have to do is to give a party for Jessica—Arnoldo's will be the place, I think—and she'll invite everybody from the Jubility; even the *Echo* man. I'll tell 'em the whole story. You know what they'll do? They'll laugh their heads off and think we're two of the finest fellows they ever met. Everybody loves a good hoax."

"I hope you're right," said Lamette doubtfully.

"Of course I'm right," said Sir Roderick. "I'll do more, too; I'll give you and Alicia my personal blessing. And you can do the same for me and Jessica."

"I accept all the terms of the peace treaty," said Lamette, smiling again, "and here's my hand on it."

"I'm delighted," said Sir Roderick. "I hope you'll live the rest of your life in Fitzeppington. I look forward to improving your acquaintance in the most fraternal way possible."

"Sir Roderick," answered Lamette, "that is very kind. But your first thoughts were after all quite correct. I see that now. While we look so very much alike, it is bound to be a source of embarrassment to both of us if we live in the same district. If I am to stay in Fitzeppington, we must alter that."

"But you can't alter nature," said the baronet.

"Perhaps not—but one can give her her head," said Lamette. "Sir Roderick, from this day on I shall cease to shave my upper lip!"

"An inspiration!" cried Sir Roderick, standing and raising his glass. "Mr. Lamette, I drink to you, to Miss Freemantle . . . and to your damn great bushy moustache." THE END

© *Clive Burnley, 1958*

As the man with the beard picked himself up, his assailant had to be restrained from stamping him into the floor . . .

EMERGENCY CALL TO DANGER · 1

I talk a

by FRED SULLIVAN

Through the battered door came the frenzied threat, 'I must kill.' My replies were hours of gentle words—and a shot of sedative

After barricading himself for seven hours

At 12.30 a.m. on March 13 last year, when I arrived at Shrewsbury Road in the Paddington district of London, the scene was dramatic. Normally, the road is a quiet backwater. Now it was crowded with sightseers staring at Number 23, a narrow three-storey building at the far end. Police had formed a cordon round the front door. A lamp burned in a top floor room.

Suddenly the curtains of the room were ripped aside. Standing at the window, his face glistening with sweat, was Benediet Obidine, a stocky, thirty-six year old Nigerian. "I will kill! I must kill!" he shouted.

As a mental welfare officer my job was to help the police in getting him to hospital for treatment. Already he had stabbed a constable who had tried to reach him, and had slashed the throat of a police dog.

Deciding that the moment he had been overpowered he would have to be drugged to prevent further injury to others or to himself, I went to Paddington General Hospital. The duty doctor there gave me 15 c.c. of paraldehyde and a hypodermic syringe.

Back at Shrewsbury Road the situation was worsening. Obidine had started to throw bedding and cooking pots out of the window. I told Acting Superintendent Trefor Simmonds, the police officer in charge of the siege, that I would go up and try to reason with the Nigerian. He said he would come with me.

A silence fell over the street as we went through the front door and climbed the bare, blood-spattered stairs. I left the hypodermic, wrapped in a flannel ready for use, on the landing between the first and second floors.

When we stopped outside the yellow-white door of Obidine's room, we could hear his deep breathing. The door opened outwards, making it too risky for us to try to rush in and surprise him. He might have come out at us, and the stairs looked as if they would collapse if a fight broke out on them.

I knocked. Obidine, I had been told, dreaded uniforms, so I said: "I'm not a policeman. I want you to come to hospital."

In reply, Obidine hurled himself at the door and plunged the blade of a stiletto through it.

For an hour Simmonds and I pleaded with the Nigerian to surrender. But his only response was: "I must kill . . . I must kill. . . ."

Shortly after 2 a.m. I heard the turntable ladder of a fire engine bump against the window of the room. A policeman who tried to climb over the sill was forced back when Obidine swung at him with a spade.

Another idea was tried. A young army lieutenant came up to the landing with a box of tear-gas bombs. Much as we disliked having to consider such methods, we decided to use one of the bombs.

"We'll get it into the room by taking out a door panel," said Simmonds. As a fireman got to work on the panel, Obidine began a savage war dance. He thumped his feet on the boards, whooped, chanted and raved.

When the panel had been removed the room, which was only ten feet by six, was a fantastic sight. China, bedding and furniture were in ruins. Amid the debris was Obidine, the stiletto in one hand and a short ornamental dagger in the other, shouting that he had to see blood.

Obviously tear-gas would merely have made him jump out of the window. The idea was abandoned. I persuaded Simmonds to let me talk to Obidine alone. When the others had gone, I knocked on the door again.

"Why won't you talk with me?" I asked.

"I no talk. I kill."

I lit a cigarette and, speaking softly but firmly, began one of the long, carefully constructed arguments which are part of the fascination of my work. The hours went by. I tried to appeal to his conscience by reminding him of the trouble he was causing.

"White people cause *me* trouble because I am black!" he shouted.

So that was it; for months he had been brooding on the colour of his skin. It had preyed on

maniac out of murder

in a London flat, Benedict Obidine goes quietly. Sullivan persuaded him to give himself up

the poor man's mind to such a degree, and the tension had become so unbearable, that he had determined to kill to prove to the world that he was as good as white men.

His brother joined me on the landing, and together we told Obidine of the sorrow he was bringing to his family and friends in Nigeria. His brow furrowed at this. Then I steered the conversation round to God. Obidine was a devout man, and when I talked of the wrath that faced him if he continued to threaten to kill he came up close to the hole in the door, listening.

THERE was a long pause, and slowly, in complete silence, he passed the stiletto, the spade, the dagger, a crowbar and a jemmy through the hole. The instant he gave me each item I grasped it—without taking my eyes off his—and threw it over my shoulder down the stairs.

At about 7 a.m., four hours after our conversation had begun, I moved away some blocks of timber which firemen had laid to prevent Obidine from opening the door until he had been disarmed. Then I opened the door. Obidine, his feet astride and sweat still pouring off him, was just inside the room, ominously quiet.

"You are coming to hospital," I told him. "You will get better."

At that moment, police who had been waiting on the stairs ran up to give me support. Obidine pounced. He went for my throat. Although I managed to prevent this, he bit my chin. In the fight that followed, the police quickly pinned him down on the wreckage of his bed. While I injected his arm his teeth tore a lump of flesh from my calf. By the time he was in the police van the drug was beginning to work; he was calming down.

His destination was St. John's Hospital, Battersea. Later he went to the Old Bailey, where he was sentenced to fourteen years' imprisonment on charges which included attempting to murder the constable.

An average of two hundred mental patients are admitted to British hospitals every day throughout the year. Mental illness is now among Britain's gravest medical problems. It is the biggest single ailment, accounting for more patients in hospital than cancer, polio and tuberculosis together. About 150,000 patients occupy more than forty per cent of all hospital beds.

Duly authorized officers, or mental welfare officers as we prefer to be known, are often the first to take charge of people in need of care. London gets seven thousand cases a year, the largest number of any city. Twenty-six welfare officers share duty day and night at County Hall, Westminster, to deal with them. I am one of these, employed by the London County Council —and I must stress that the opinions I express in this series of articles are my own, and not necessarily those of the L.C.C.

In my seven years as a welfare officer, police, doctors and patients' relatives and friends have called me to private homes, offices, shops, railway stations, factories, hotels and, once, to a crowded variety theatre. During the performance I searched the darkened auditorium for the patient who had been reported to me.

About three summonses in ten, though, turn out to be false alarms. A few weeks ago I was called in to see a girl of twenty-six who had started behaving strangely on a bus.

This had seemed to be mental illness, but I could tell from experience that the girl's trouble was neurological, not mental. She had epilepsy, and her behaviour was one of the symptoms.

MENTAL illness—as distinct from mental deficiency, which is a separate condition and accounts for 60,000 patients in hospital—attacks impartially; it is not confined to any particular age group or type of job.

In all I have handled about four thousand cases. Between eighty and ninety per cent of them, however, responded to treatment and have now returned to ordinary life.

Approximately one case in seven reacts violently to the suggestion of treatment. The most dangerous patient is an epileptic with a superimposed mental disorder. The convulsions and muscle tensions which this unfortunate person suffers have the effect of physical culture; the result is extraordinary strength. In my opinion, this is the only type of mental patient who can commit a brutal murder and genuinely not remember a thing about it.

One such epileptic is a thirty-year-old engineer, to whose home in North London I am called every eighteen months or so when he has a fit.

On every occasion I have met him in order to take him to hospital for treatment until the phase passes, he has become aggressive and the interview has ended in a lively fist-fight.

Many is the time that welfare officers would have been seriously injured had it not been for the intervention of the police.

Recently I went to a London suburb to see Colin, a schizophrenic aged twenty-five. Schizophrenia, the name for a group of illnesses in which the patients lose touch with reality and cannot tell right from wrong, is the most common type of mental illness. It accounts for sixty per cent of cases, mostly young people.

Colin was a fair-haired, handsome lad, well liked by his friends and successful at his job, but now he was suffering from a severe persecution complex. He had shut himself in the back room of his home and alarmed his father by repeating over and over again that the whole world was plotting against him, that his life was finished and he might as well end it.

As is usual when I am called to a case, I arrive in an ambulance. From experience, a welfare officer can often tell at a glance what the outcome of an interview is likely to be. As soon as I realized that Colin would have to go to hospital, and that extra help would be needed to get him into the ambulance, I sent my driver round to the nearest police station. Unfortunately, it so happened that there had just been a smash-and-grab raid in the area. A big alert was on—and no policeman was available. More unfortunate still, Colin was a keen amateur boxer.

I am forty-five and weigh twelve stone. Like

most welfare officers I don't use judo—my "opponents" are not normal; they might get injured if I did—but I claim to be able to take care of myself. I had a trainee welfare officer with me on that trip. Even so, the two of us found it a stiff test of strength and wits when Colin tried to break out into the street.

After forty hectic minutes, a policeman reported to the station unexpectedly and my driver, who had been waiting there in case this happened, rushed him round to the house.

With the help of the policeman and of my driver who, like other welfare officers' drivers, was always ready to help in an emergency, Colin was put safely into the ambulance. I was exhausted. If assistance had been delayed any longer I would have been a hospital case myself.

The ambulances we use in London are small and painted black in order to be inconspicuous, but when a welfare officer gets to work a crowd can gather quickly, and occasionally misunderstand what is happening. Once I answered a phone call from a doctor in West London. He had a one-armed man in his surgery.

"He's got a persecution complex," reported the doctor. "He says that M.I.5 and the Russians are after him, and that he's determined to kill himself."

I TRIED to lead the man out of the surgery across a busy street towards the waiting ambulance. But a person with one arm, I soon found, develops surprising power in that limb, and I could hardly hold him.

To make matters worse, when we reached the pavement he shouted loudly: "Help! Police! I'm being kidnapped."

Angry shoppers collected round us. One of them ran to a phone box and dialled 999. A squad car arrived in search of the "kidnapper"—but by then my patient was safely in hospital. Here he recovered and lost all interest in suicide.

The number of suicides in Britain has risen by twenty per cent in the last ten years until it is now about 5,300 annually, or nearly as high as the number of deaths on the roads. Every year, some 5,400 people are accused of attempted suicide.

Those who are determined to take their lives, and then have last-minute doubts and hesitate, set some of the trickiest problems for welfare officers; a sudden or careless attempt at stopping them can make them go through with the deed.

I discovered Peter, a schizophrenic of twenty-two, sitting on the window sill of a fourth-floor room, his legs dangling over the street below. He was threatening to jump. When I entered the room he warned: "Come a step nearer and I'll do it."

Somehow I had to get him away from the window. As calmly as I could I sat in a chair near the door, lit a cigarette and played for time, talking of everyday things while I tried to work out a plan. I offered a cigarette and held out the packet, but Peter refused.

"That's an obvious trick," he said. "If you think I'm coming to get it, you're mistaken."

After half an hour, when he had relaxed a little and even seemed to be rather enjoying the fuss he was causing, he let me know that he was passionately keen on jazz. That gave me an idea. I set about provoking him. Quietly and matter of factly, as if I believed in what I was saying, I said the most insulting things about jazz, about the people who played it and those who listened to it, that came to mind.

It had the effect I wanted. Peter was nettled. He forgot about jumping. He grew more and more furious with my apparent arrogance and stupidity. Finally he could stand it no longer. He swung his legs back across the sill and came at me.

A struggle began, but the main battle was over; he was away from the window.

My colleagues have pursued and caught would-be suicides on such dizzy places as clock towers, church spires and high parapets. My

Above: a turntable ladder reaches up to a top floor Paddington flat in an attempt to move a dangerous Nigerian, Benedict Obidine. Left: Obidine is carried away by police to hospital, trial—and fourteen years in prison

own most hazardous case in this respect was in a block of luxury flats in the West End.

A middle-aged woman had a flat on the seventh floor. She was deluded and had hallucinations. When I arrived outside her front door, which she had locked and chained, she had taken her telephone off its cradle, piled her carpets and furniture into corners and opened all the windows, ready to jump out.

I could hear her pacing the living-room, talking with the "voices" she was hearing and pleading with an imaginary man—who, she was saying, had moved the carpets and furniture—to leave her alone.

A few yards farther along the corridor in which I stood was a door leading on to the platform of a fire escape. From this platform could be seen a balcony, bordered by metal railings, which ran round part of the woman's flat. Her living-room was out of sight beyond a corner, but the bathroom window was open. There was a chance that she hadn't locked the bathroom door.

The gap between the platform and the balcony was five feet. Not daring to look down, I took off my jacket, climbed on to the platform's railings, leaped across the gap over on to the balcony and squeezed into the bathroom. I tried the door handle. It wasn't locked.

I burst into the living-room. The woman turned to stare at me, halting in mid-sentence, then made for the nearest window. But I had the advantage of surprise and caught her before she could jump.

The most unusual reason for mental illness that I have come across was during the visit of Bulganin and Khruschev to Britain. This event affected the pent-up emotions of a woman scriptwriter. She began to hear "voices"—including, she said, Bulganin's—calling her.

She actually got as far as securing an interview with the Russian leader before her dazed behaviour and rambling conversation gave her away as a schizophrenic. Embarrassed Russian officials called the police who, in turn, called me.

Doctors are still puzzled in their search for the exact cause of schizophrenia. No doubt when it is found the proportion of recoveries will rise from the present eighty-five per cent or so to a hundred per cent.

Other mental illnesses can be traced to prolonged excesses, emotional or physical. When I was in Birmingham, where I spent three years as a welfare officer before coming to London, one of my patients was a wealthy stockbroker. He had let money become an obsession; his greed for it dominated his entire existence. The result, after many years, was megalomania, leading to depression and a suicide attempt.

The tragic aspect of some mental cases, that the trouble could have been avoided if relatives had been more understanding, is particularly true when women are married to habitual drunkards. For years they try to make ends meet with too little housekeeping money. They go short of food in order to feed the children and never know when the husband will come home and give the whole family a hiding.

Why these women stand for such treatment amazes me, but they do. They never discuss their sorrow with anybody and keep it inside themselves. Then, after months and years of semi-starvation and tension, they can't stand it any longer. Their minds snap.

I have as many as 150 of these cases every year. Recently there was one in which the wife suddenly decided one afternoon that when her husband came home she would hit him on the head with a heavy case. I arrived on the scene to find her in a frenzy. Her husband was lucky to have escaped with minor injury.

Deeply unhappy married life can also breed mental illness. An increasing number of young husbands are needing help.

In David's case an unhappy childhood was the root of the trouble. He had been deserted by his mother when he was six, and the shock had left him with a hatred of all women. He took revenge on them. He allowed them to fall in love with him—this was easy, for he was very good-looking—and when marriage seemed imminent he delighted in jilting them.

Susan, though, refused to be jilted. She was

so infatuated with him that she was willing to endure any humiliation. She clung to him; he couldn't get rid of her. In the end, in a mood of desperation, he married her.

The marriage lasted until a daughter was born. Another female thrust on David! He tried to strangle Susan. Neighbours heard her screams and called the police.

I managed to persuade the police not to prosecute, and David agreed to go to a mental hospital as a voluntary patient. Susan divorced him when he came out, but by then he had lost his hatred. Today they are remarried—and happy.

A big difference in ages can, I have found, lead to mental illness if the older partner is over-conscious of it. One woman patient I had was married at thirty-seven; her husband was twenty-two. When he became thirty-five, she was fifty and began to tell herself, quite wrongly, that she was no longer attractive to him and that, equally wrongly, he was being unfaithful to her.

As she explained to me, after she had tried to throw herself under a train: "I spent almost every penny we had on clothes in order to look nice. Then I started to take slimming pills. They affected my appetite. I grew more and more haggard, and when my husband remarked on it my fears were confirmed."

Anna, on the other hand, had youth on her side but was Chinese. Her English husband was in the army when he married her in Hongkong just after the war. They were happy until they came to England, where everything was strange to her. She couldn't settle down. Furthermore, her once-loving husband started to criticize her behaviour and looks, constantly comparing them with those of English girls.

Anna felt homesick, bitter and neglected, and spent lonely evenings grieving over her plight. Matters came to a climax when she went at her husband with a carving knife.

Luckily, her few weeks' stay in a mental hospital filled her husband with remorse, and he promised to give their marriage another try. He has kept that promise, I know; I visit them regularly. . . .

MENTAL welfare officers of the L.C.C. are on a salary scale of from £815 to £1,140 a year and usually have hospital training. When I left my native Lancashire to find a career, I was so interested in mental health that I spent twelve years as a nurse in mental hospitals and qualified as a State Registered Nurse. In the army I was in a psychiatric team of the R.A.M.C., and I became a welfare officer in 1951.

A major trend in our work in recent years has been an increase in the number of coloured patients. At eleven o'clock one evening, the doctor in the casualty department of a big London hospital sent for me. When I arrived, he explained what had happened.

"A West African came in saying that he had swallowed some razor blades and wanted to die. Then he snatched a pair of surgical tweezers off a tray and swallowed them. And while we weren't looking he unscrewed an electric light bulb and bit a lump out of it."

I looked at the man who had done these extraordinary things. He was a husky figure in a T-shirt and jeans. On the evidence, he was a clear case of mental illness, but I had doubts. He was relaxed and smiling. He had none of the agitated movements, the darting of the eyes, the twitching of hands and mouth which can be signs of mental suffering. Furthermore, suicides in my experience don't choose such spectacular ways of doing it and they don't wait until they are in hospital.

I questioned the man and his story came out. "I'm in show business," he admitted. "I tour fairgrounds with a 'self-torture' act."

That evening he had been out of work and had decided to join the "wrist slashers" and other malingerers who give themselves slight injuries and go to hospitals in order to get beds for the night. The previous night the West African had done his act before horrified doctors and nurses at another hospital, been admitted as a patient and made a remarkable "recovery" when the psychiatrist had come to see him in the morning.

While admiring his pluck, I had to warn him that if he tried it again he would spend the night with the police.

Coloured people have become genuine mental patients because they arrived in Britain with impossibly high hopes. Lottie, for instance, was a thirty-five year old West Indian who had long dreamed of coming to London with her husband and three children. Enough was saved for the journey and the family took a flat in Bayswater.

THINGS didn't work out as Lottie had hoped, however. Her husband couldn't get a job, the cost of living was high, and winter in London was a shock after the warmth of Barbados. One afternoon the phone in my office rang. Lottie's neighbour had come home from work early and smelled gas. Police had broken into Lottie's flat and found her in the gas-filled kitchen with her children.

The police had to prosecute her for attempted murder, but the trial was a formality; she went straight from court to a mental hospital.

Other coloured mental patients are those who have come to Britain to study medicine, the law or other careers. They find they can't make the grade and fail their exams. This is bad enough when it happens to a white student, but often it is far worse for a coloured one. He daren't go back home. He would be ridiculed by his friends and branded as a failure for the rest of his life.

One such case was Peng, who had come to London for medical training. When he learned that he hadn't passed his exams he was so depressed that he looked for comfort in the occult. Soon he began to have delusions.

When I arrived at 2 a.m. at the Bloomsbury lodging house where he was staying, he was striding up and down his room in a flowered silk dressing-gown, a badminton racket in one hand and an umbrella in the other, shouting: "I have been chosen to save the world."

My driver went on round to the nearest police station for help. Meanwhile I tried to talk to Peng, but he "fenced" with the umbrella until he had trapped me in a corner.

A policewoman arrived from the station, but women do not handle mental patients unless it is absolutely necessary. Since Peng, apart from an occasional prod with the ferrule, didn't seem to mean any harm, I sent the policewoman away. A police inspector came and together we got Peng into the ambulance.

All the way to hospital he kept taking jars and bottles of "magic" oils and lotions from his dressing-gown pockets and anointing himself.

The telephone call asking me to go to the lodging house had been made by one of Peng's neighbours, but when I was in the building I never saw another occupant. People in lodging houses and hotels usually vanish behind locked doors when a mentally ill person is around.

One telephone call I shall not forget was from the mate of a ten thousand ton Italian merchantman. "Come quickly," he said. "Our captain's gone off his rocker. He's got a gun and is dangerous."

The ship in question was anchored in the Thames. A River Police launch took me out to her, and I climbed her rope ladder followed by four hefty constables. A deckhand pointed out the captain's cabin. The constables and I burst into it as one man, expecting to have to overpower a crazed gunman.

The captain, a dark, well-built Italian, was merely sitting at his desk. He looked up in astonishment at our sudden entry, but gestured to a curved plush settee in front of him and said in English: "Won't you please sit down?"

This wasn't the kind of welcome we had anticipated. Nevertheless, his calm appearance did not strike me as remarkable. The intellectual paranoid type of mental patient can, between outbursts, seem completely normal.

No sooner had we crossed to the settee and sat on the edge of it, ready for anything to happen, than the captain swiftly pulled open the bottom right-hand drawer of his desk. We tensed and leaned forward, wondering if he would produce a gun. But all he brought out was a bottle of whisky, a bottle of gin and six glasses.

We thought it wisest to humour him and accepted the drinks he offered. When we each had a glass in hand he asked: "And what is the reason for this visit?"

Telling a patient that one suspects him of being mentally ill is a delicate task, but eventually I let the captain know that we were his friends, that we wanted to help him, that if he came to hospital he would be well looked after and would, no doubt, return to his ship in a short time, fully recovered.

The captain heard me out. Then his eyes twinkled. "Who phoned you?" he asked. "Was it my mate by any chance?"

"Yes," I said.

"That explains it. I discharged him this morning. He's a Communist and stirred up so much discontent among my crew that I had to get rid of him. He swore that he would get his own back on me. This, presumably, is it."

The captain leaned back and laughed. The constables laughed, too, in relief, and I joined in.

It was one of those rare days when I came off duty with a light heart.

© *Fred Sullivan, 1958*

NEXT WEEK: The case of Gerda, the girl who wanted to die . . .

The Gardener

Sweet pea and mignonette and
marigold
Is just about as much as his small
box
Three storeys high above the
street will hold.
No doubt he often dreams of
scented stocks
In rich profusion by some garden
wall,
Of rambling roses and red
hollyhocks
And the prize orchid, wildest
dream of all.
Yet, at heart, he's satisfied and
makes
The most of his hanging garden,
three by one
By one foot deep: and what a
pride he takes
In his collaboration with the sun.
I know a man with twenty acres
of ground
And not one flower anywhere to
be found.

WILLIAM CLARKE

From the shore of stone you

sunshine. It's

It was Queen Caroline's idea to build the Serpentine. Work started in 1730. Now it's a weekend Mecca for thousands of Londoners

At six o'clock one morning last autumn Ted Stoter, a red-faced, sixteen-stone six-footer in his fifties, was striding majestically to work across the short stretch of Hyde Park between Knightsbridge and the Serpentine. He passed only two other people. One was a middle-aged man in evening dress who was waltzing with an invisible partner in the middle of an otherwise deserted football pitch. The other was a young blonde in red velvet trousers running barefoot through the sand of Rotten Row.

Some people might consider these actions mildly eccentric, but Stoter, whose duties include breaking the ice for men who wish to swim on bitter winter mornings, takes the view that everyone is eccentric on occasion. He claims to have seen "everything but murder" in his twenty-eight years as superintendent of the Lido.

Three years ago he was present at the baptism of two Jehovah's Witnesses in the Serpentine's murky waters. He has spoken to a woman who had flown three thousand miles from New York to scatter the ashes of her dog along its shores because it had been so happy playing there.

One morning on his arrival he found a note from a suicide telling him exactly where to look for the body. On another occasion he found a stuffed lion on a raft floating in the bathing area.

During the war he watched U.S. commandos carrying out invasion exercises there.

Londoners make full use of the forty-acre lake in Hyde Park. Stoter has watched them swimming, sunbathing, fishing, boating, exercising dogs, and even bird-watching. In the spring the

Ted Stoter talks to bathers at the Serpentine Lido. His biggest day was in 1955 when 15,000 people paid to bathe in the lake in Hyde Park

can swim or paddle, sail a boat, build up your muscles or just soak up

a seaside holiday for only a sixpenny ticket—right in the heart of London

Stroll down Park Lane—to the beach

by REX GRIZELL

only true Easter Parade takes place along the Serpentine road by the north shore.

In years when the weather is fine a crowd of half a million watches the August regatta on the lake. Every year at 7.30 on a Sunday morning in November the Veteran Car Rally to Brighton starts from the Serpentine road. In spite of the early hour, Londoners turn out in hundreds to watch.

One hot day last summer, as several hundred Londoners swam and sunbathed at the Serpentine Lido, four teddy boys pulled their boat under the ropes which mark off the bathing area and began to manoeuvre the boat dangerously near to swimmers, lashing out at them with the oars.

The jeering teddy boys ignored the patrolling boatmen who asked them to leave, but they had reckoned without the average Londoner's dislike of bullies. Angry swimmers converged on their boat and manhandled it into shallower water. Then they dragged the teddy boys out and vigorously ducked them. When at last they reached dry land one of the teddy boys fainted, another had a black eye, and a third bled from a gash on the face.

Stoter was not surprised that his clients dealt so promptly with the teddy boys. "To thousands of Londoners of both sexes, from schoolchildren to grandparents, the Serpentine is a weekend holiday resort. They come here to relax, and they don't want their pleasure spoilt by hooligans."

Many people do break the regulations at the Serpentine, but as a rule they use their common sense and endanger nobody but themselves, says Stoter. Although bathing is not permitted outside the bathing area, the police and park officials find it impossible to enforce this rule in hot weather. And if hot weather comes before the official opening of the Lido season, London children do not wait to be told whether they may swim or not. Police have arrested débutantes and their escorts swimming there at four in the morning.

On hot summer days more than ten thousand people pay sixpence each to use the Lido. The record day was July 11, 1955, when nearly 15,000 people flocked in. Stoter and his lifeguards pulled out seventeen swimmers in difficulties during the day.

Throughout the summer season from May to October a chlorinating boat is in operation all day. The water is tested by government laboratories three times a week. Though the water is not as clean as that in an efficiently run swimming bath, it is considered perfectly safe for bathing.

Regular summer visitors include business men who arrive with briefcases, typewriters and their secretaries, and spend the afternoon answering correspondence. The summer crowds also include keep-fit grandmothers, body builders, exhibitionists, peeping toms and sun-worshippers. On hot days, says Stoter, only about two people in every ten actually go in the water.

Presence of mind, monastic calm, resource, physical strength and resistance to cold are among the qualities that Stoter needs to deal with the variety of incidents at the Serpentine. When a man wearing nothing but a shirt began to annoy sunbathers, Stoter noticed that he had a small cut on one toe. "I told him he should have something put on it because of the danger of infection. I got him round to the first-aid post, then he squared up to me. He swung one blow and fell over. I had him dressed and outside in less than five minutes."

One of his most difficult "rescues" was of the stuffed lion mascot of the Imperial Service College. Students of Battersea Polytechnic kidnapped it and left it floating on the Serpentine. It was anchored by 150 bricks cemented together, but Stoter did not realize this until he tried to tow it to the bank. All he did was to pull the raft from under the lion, which slowly sank. It took Stoter more than two hours to salvage the lion. "People who saw it emerging from the water were even more surprised than those who saw it go down," he says.

The Serpentine's most regular visitors are the members of the Serpentine Swimming Club. During the B.B.C.'s New Year's Eve television programme for 1956 a number of men in evening dress were shown drinking cocktails together. Viewers were puzzled when the cameras travelled down and revealed that the men were trouserless. They suddenly stripped off dinner jackets, shirts and ties, and in swimming trunks ran through

Long queues form for Sunday boating on the lake. Once teddy boys sailed into difficulties

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

the door and dived into the Serpentine—temperature eight degrees above freezing point. The members of the club were having their last race of 1956.

The sixty members of the Serpentine Swimming Club, founded in 1864, can claim to be among the hardiest men in Britain.

They include doctors, dentists, bricklayers, newsvendors, firemen, policemen, a patent officer, and forty-five year old Commander Gerald Forsberg, R.N., who last year swam the Channel in the record time of 13 hours 33 minutes.

Many of them swim all the year round, ignoring the weather conditions. Several of the all-the-year-rounders are men in their seventies. Clarence Reed, the club secretary, gave up winter swimming after an early morning dip a few years ago. The water temperature was thirty-four degrees, and an attack of cramp completely numbed his left arm and leg: as a result he had to be rescued.

Some all-the-year-rounders are not members of the club. They have included Ian Harvey, M.P., and Robert Allan, M.P., Parliamentary private secretary to the Prime Minister. Other winter regulars are a Mayfair dress designer, a ladies' hairdresser, and Francis Hill-Cole, a wealthy financier, who is eighty years old.

Women cannot join the club, but in a snowstorm on Christmas morning, 1952, actress Hermione Gingold was photographed in a 1920 bathing costume about to take the plunge. "She didn't take it," says Stoter.

SWIMMING is not the only winter activity at the Serpentine. A retired naval commander rows a boat for half an hour every morning and an author of sea stories rows for twenty minutes and then skips for ten minutes behind the boathouse.

There are pike, carp, tench, bream, roach and eels in the Serpentine. About five thousand fishing permits are issued every year and a lot more people fish without them.

When a bomb dropped in the lake during the war, Stoter collected six wastepaper baskets full of stunned fish. He also once landed an eel which a swimmer had seen struggling on the surface. It weighed 6 lb. 4 oz. and had choked on a four-inch roach.

The island in the Serpentine was formed in 1873, and made a bird sanctuary in 1924. The latest government report on bird life in the Royal parks lists more than fifty different species of birds seen during the past year on and around the Serpentine. They include tawny owls which for the past twelve years have frequented the same elm tree near the north bank.

Bird lovers often come to Stoter during the winter with reports that birds are frozen in the ice. He has never yet found one that really was. One morning it took him an hour to break the ice to reach a motionless swan.

When he was five yards away it flew off. Sometimes large birds cannot take off because their feet skid on the ice. Stoter gets as close as he can, and then throws a handful of sand under them to give them a grip.

The Serpentine was made at the command of Queen Caroline, consort of George II. Work began on September 26, 1730, and was completed in the summer of 1731. The cost, in the money of that time, was £4,755 9s. 7d.

The first public use of the lake was in 1814 when a mock sea battle with manned miniature ships was fought on it to commemorate Nelson's victories. Celebrations for the coronation of George IV on July 19, 1821, included a boat race on the Serpentine, and the spectacle of a huge raft being pulled along by four boats—on the raft was a triumphal carriage drawn by two elephants with oriental beauties riding on their backs.

For many years footpads and highwaymen frequented the paths near the Serpentine, and a dell near the north bank was a favourite place for bloody duels.

The Serpentine has several times been frozen over with ice thick enough for public skating. In 1826 a tradesman won a hundred guinea wager by driving a wagon with four horses across it. In 1855 Queen Victoria and Prince Albert drove alongside the lake in a horse-drawn sleigh to see a crowd estimated at 100,000 on the ice. Under present regulations there must be five inches of ice before skating is permitted.

The Serpentine contains a hundred million gallons of water. The original supply came from the Westbourne, a small stream which flowed down from Hampstead Heath to the Thames. By 1835 this was so polluted by London drains that it was diverted into a sewer. The water now comes from surface drainage, and when needed, is pumped from a well in St. James's Park.

In the course of years many odd things have found their way to the bottom of the Serpentine. Murderers have thrown their murder weapons into the lake, and bag snatchers have thrown in rifled handbags by the dozen. Stoter is often asked to drag the lake for things which people have lost.

One woman asked him to look for a ring which she had lost while feeding the birds. He found it in eight feet of water in less than ten minutes. At other times he has dragged up revolvers, German helmets, chairs, and a total of thirty sets of false teeth.

Once while dragging for a watch, Stoter brought a heavy sack to the surface. At first he thought it contained a body, but when he opened it he saw that it was full of silver tableware of all sorts.

He took it to the police station. It was unclaimed after twelve months and was returned to him. When he took it to a jeweller to have it valued, the man sent out an assistant to keep Stoter occupied while he telephoned the police. When he was satisfied that Stoter had obtained it honestly he valued the silver. "It was worth a tidy sum," says Stoter. But he won't say how much.

THE END

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

An exciting new RAFFLES story by Barry Perowne

RAFFLES and the Seaside Hotel

Housewife in a stately home

The armour's rusty and the plumbing a mystery, but Betsy Innes-Smith enjoys running a mansion with forty rooms

All true blues are admirers of this highbrow one-man band. He plays buffoon, rings bells and roars the right songs. He's the Tories' . . .

STUNT MAN

DURING the Suez engagement, Lord Hailsham, wearing the blue serge suit and white-topped cap of a First Lord of the Admiralty, watched an approaching helicopter from a British warship off Port Said. As it hovered overhead, a naval officer strapped in a sling was lowered gently to the deck below. Hailsham chuckled delightedly. "I want to do that," he said.

His escort made the necessary arrangements and shortly afterwards Hailsham was airborne. "I do not know whether you could call it sport," he said later, "but I thought I would have to try it."

Hailsham's robust spontaneity and obvious enjoyment of life have always charmed those who have met him personally. The bell-ringing at the Conservative Party conference and the auctioning of a bathing-suit handed up by a heckler at the Rochdale by-election meeting brought forth roars of approval from those present. But both incidents disturbed thoughtful Conservatives. Instead of giving the public a picture of himself as a responsible leader, he was turning himself into a figure of fun.

Lord Pakenham, a lifelong friend, summed up what many outsiders think: "Intellectually, he is the most brilliant man of his age in the Conservative Party. But he had to wait five years for office because they weren't quite sure what he'd do. He has great gifts. But can he control his temperament?"

At fifty, Quintin McGarel Hogg, second Viscount Hailsham, Lord President of the Council and chairman of the Conservative and Unionist Party, has made one of the swiftest political rises of modern times. Within two years of resigning a reputed £15,000-a-year practice as a barrister, he is the second or third most powerful political force in the country. Exuberant, quick-tempered and with a profound moral sense, he has made his mark in activities as diverse as farming, versifying and mountain climbing. But in spite of his talent, he has failed to convince the public of his political stability.

From the moment they hear him clumping across the outer office at 10 a.m., his civil servants at the Old Treasury Building, Whitehall, know they are in for a day which they politely call "stimulating." At any moment the tenor of an interview in his lofty panelled office is likely to be interrupted by angry shouts or huge gusts of laughter. In the Ministry of Education, his reaction to a letter from the Treasury was so violent that he broke the chair he was sitting on.

The tendency to give vent to his feelings runs right through his life. "There's nothing of the stiff upper lip about him," says an intimate. "He has strong feelings and he shows them. When his son had an accident last year, he went round for two days looking like death." Some time ago, when Lady Hailsham persuaded him to attend a charity performance of *For Me And My Gal*, his enormous laughter was heard all over the cinema.

At the Ministry of Education he was so fond of writing exactly what he thought in replying to letters from parents that his officials tried to keep them away from him. To one he wrote: "Dear Sir, Since I made a considerable financial sacrifice by accepting public office, your suggestion that I resign to save the taxpayers' money in no way moves me." In reply to a letter which had attacked him bitterly, he snapped: "Dear Sir, Thank you for your letter, Hailsham."

On what he regards as matters of principle he is rigid to the point of awkwardness. Because he likes to spend weekends with his family and is deeply religious, he resigned from the ITV programme *Free Speech* when it was moved from Friday night to Sunday afternoon.

Just before he was due to appear on B.B.C. *Press Conference* as Minister of Education, the producer mentioned that he would be asked why he sent his son to a public school. Hailsham bridled. Unless the question were withdrawn, he snapped, he would refuse to take part. When asked why, he said that he did not want to embarrass his son.

As a barrister, he once protested strongly against a court's decision to exclude the press. Without waiting for the bench to comment the clerk said: "Lord Hailsham has spoken and that must be the end of it."

Hailsham rounded on him sharply. "That is not for you to say. I am proposing the motion to the court and not its clerk."

Distinctly worried, the chairman butted in: "We must be advised by our clerk."

Hailsham snapped: "But not in defiance of the Act."

After conferring briefly with his colleagues, the chairman reversed the court's decision. The press stayed and reported the case.

In politics such behaviour has not made his path easy. When he disagreed with the Archbishop of Canterbury he accused him of heresy. During the debate on the Television Bill he described the proposals of his own party as "a disreputable piece of chicanery" and the arguments for them "a lot of insolent rubbish."

He has unnecessarily antagonized Liberals by claiming that Asquith, if living, would be a member of the Conservative cabinet, and after his much-publicised threat to give "the treatment, the full personal treatment" to people who criticized the Queen, Sir Richard Acland told him: "Come down from the toy horse on which you've been riding round the nursery floor ever since you took your present job."

But sometimes his strong approach has paid off. In April, 1957, during a visit to America, he was closely questioned on the television programme *Meet The Press* about the British Government's Suez policy. He told twenty million Americans: "We saved the world from a major war. We gave you some time to develop some kind of Middle Eastern policy of your own. For that, I think you ought to be very grateful."

Next day a British correspondent in New York cabled: "Cheers! At long last the lion roars. Rejoice in Hailsham and what has been done for Britain in the last few days."

It is to his full-bloodedness that Hailsham owes his undoubted popularity among rank-and-file Conservatives. While the government pursues policies of moderation, his speeches seem to promise the more extreme actions which many of them would prefer.

LORD HINCHINGBROOKE, leader of the Suez rebels, says: "He stands for religion, the family, patriotism, an end to the class war and the necessary financial measures. We hope he can translate his beliefs into political action."

A Labour M.P. comments: "That's just the trouble. He's good at going round and saying all the things the Tories want to hear. But whether it's wise is doubtful. They'll turn round and ask why the government hasn't done them."

Whether charming or angry, chuckling delightedly at one of his own jokes or sunk in the deepest misery, Hailsham always seems larger than life. The unruly forelock, the wandering tie, the half-mast trousers—all go to make up a figure which has been called Pickwickian and which cartoonists are sometimes tempted to depict as an ageing Billy Bunter. He recently appeared in London in a coat which was literally bursting at the buttons.

He is prodigiously untidy. His vast mahogany desk is usually strewn with documents and when he reads a newspaper he leaves its pages lying in different parts of the room. When he sees in an official file a document which he thinks will be of use to him, he tears it out and stuffs it in his pocket.

He cares nothing for what people think. He has weak ankles and during the 1950 election hobbled into a meeting with one of his frequent

Continued on page 24

Lord Hailsham tries a helicopter descent gear. Often caricatured as Billy Bunter, he was the most brilliant scholar seen at Oxford since Gladstone

Judy's love for Johnnie

T
a

by NEVIL SHUTE

She insisted on giving me a flower from the bouquet I had bought her, and she tucked it carefully into the strap of my Sam Browne

was gay and glittering. For who could know that tragedy was so near?

The Rainbow and the Rose

ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKI

I SPENT last night huddled in a draughty freight plane, flying down to Tasmania. Today I made two trips from Buxton in an Auster, trying to fly young Dr. Turnbull in to Lewis River, where Johnnie Pascoe is lying injured. . . .

I am Clarke, an airline pilot, English-born, now living in Melbourne. It was from the radio in the pilots' room that I first heard the bad news about Johnnie Pascoe; how he had fractured his skull when he crashed at the Hoskins's remote Lewis River homestead while on a mercy flight to save a sick child there.

I knew I had to help if I could. Johnnie Pascoe was a very old friend. It was a friendship which started thirty years ago, when he taught me to fly at a club in the English Midlands. He was a veteran pilot even then, ex-R.F.C. Now, at sixty, he was still flying, with an airfield of his own, at Buxton. . . .

I couldn't land the doctor. There was only a crazy little airstrip at Lewis River, and the weather was bad. After the second attempt I flew back to Buxton, telling myself that we'd have to try again tomorrow.

I went to Pascoe's house, where I was staying the night. It was full of souvenirs of his long flying life. Deathly tired, I was on the point of turning in when a woman arrived. She said her name was Marian Forbes, but that meant nothing to me. I didn't take to her, and I resented her keeping me from my bed.

"Let's cut this short," I said. "I'm going to bed in thirty seconds. Now who are you?"

She said: "Well, I'm John Pascoe's daughter."

PART TWO

The Woman From Adelaide

I STOOD silent for a moment. "I'm sorry," I said. "I never knew he had a daughter." It didn't seem to be any concern of mine, anyway. "We're doing everything we can. There's nothing to do now but to wait until the weather clears."

"That's what they told me in the hotel." She paused, and then she said: "I live in Adelaide." Later on, I learned that her husband was one of the leading surgeons in the city. "I told Dennis, when we heard it on the news last night, I told him that I'd have to come over and see that everything possible was being done. After all, he *is* my father."

I wrinkled my brows. "You weren't very closely in touch with him?"

She laughed shortly. "Good Lord, no! I don't suppose he knows I'm in Australia. I don't suppose he cares where I live. He left my mother when I was two years old and after that we never heard a word from him. I knew that he was here because I saw it in the paper."

It seemed a funny sort of relationship, but it was nothing to do with me. "Well, everything that's possible is being done, Mrs. Forbes," I said.

A gust of wind whistled around the house and beat upon the window.

"They tell me you're a married man," she said.

I was surprised. "That's right."

"Any children?"

"Two." I wondered what on earth she was getting at.

"I wouldn't want to see anything happen to a man like you," she said flatly. "Not for the sake of a man like Pascoe."

There was hostility in that remark, of course; hostility to her father, and I didn't quite know what to say. I was evidently dealing with a spiteful woman, and I wanted to go to bed.

I said: "I thought you had come to help him."

"That's right," she said. "I'm his daughter. If there's anything needs doing—nursing home or surgeon's fees or paying him an allowance till he's fit to earn his living again—I've got a sort of duty to him, I suppose. That's why I came over. Apart from that, I don't want to have anything to do with him. He's an out-and-out rotter."

"Well, you may as well go back to Adelaide right away," I said curtly. "He seems to have plenty of money for anything he needs, and he's got friends who'll look after him."

She was silent for a moment. Then she said: "You don't like me much, do you?"

"Lady," I replied, "I don't like you because I've been up all night and I've done quite a bit of flying and you're keeping me out of my bed. I'll be in a better frame of mind to talk to you tomorrow, if there's anything to talk about."

She got to her feet. "If you don't want to listen to what I've got to say—well, that's the end of it." She paused, and then she said: "I had lunch in the hotel here with a Doctor Parkinson and Mr. Barnes, who flew him up from Hobart to help in the rescue. Doctor Turnbull came in afterwards and he was telling them about the two flights that you've made today down to the Lewis River."

"What about them?"

"When Doctor Turnbull told them what you'd done, they were horrified at the risks that you'd been taking. Doctor Parkinson said he doesn't want to fly with you."

I was very angry. "I never heard such nonsense. At a time like this things have to be stretched a bit."

She picked up her bag. "I don't know anything about flying," she said. "I only know what they were saying in the hotel—people who do know about it. They think you're crazy. I think that, too, because Johnnie Pascoe simply isn't worth it. That's what I came to say."

She moved towards the door, but I stood motionless. I didn't like her spite against her father, but there might have been a twisted element of kindness in her visit, kindness to me and to my family. I stood in thought for a moment, and my eye fell upon the portrait photograph on the wall behind her.

"Was your mother's name Judy?" I inquired.

She looked at me curiously. "Judy Lester," she said. "That was her stage name. Why did you ask?"

"Only because there are three photos of her in this room," I told her curtly. "That's a funny thing, if he's the sort of man you say."

She was startled. "Where?"

"On the wall behind you."

She turned and looked at the many photographs, and then her eyes fastened on the portrait. "That's my mother," she said. "I've got a copy of that photograph somewhere."

I did not speak. I stood there thinking what

a fool I was to have interested her in the pictures. She would probably stay half an hour longer.

She looked at the picture of the girl posed in a golfer's swing, and said: "That's her, again. Of course, she was much younger then." And then her eye wandered to the one of Johnnie and Judy in front of the biplane fighter, the laughing one. She turned to me and asked: "Is that him?"

"Of course it is," I said. "That's Pascoe. Didn't you ever meet him?"

She shook her head. "We lived in Gardena, Los Angeles—that's where I was brought up. Ma went there for the movies, and then when her contract ended she kept a rooming house. That was after she divorced my stepfather." She paused, and then she indicated the photograph. "*He* lived in England between the wars."

I made another effort to unstick her so that I could go to bed. "Well, there it is," I said. "He's kept those photos forty years."

Her lips curled a little. "Evidence of a conquest." She glanced around the room. "He's got quite a few others to keep her company. Evidence of other conquests, I suppose."

She was looking over to the photograph of Brenda Marshall, standing by the Moth in her white overall with her smile and her short, curly hair.

"He's over sixty years old," I said. "If he likes to keep photographs of women who've been kind to him all through his life, that's nothing to do with us. We've no right to be in this house anyway, but I've got to use it because I've got to get some sleep. I'll have to ask you to go away now, and leave me to it."

She asked: "Can I use your telephone to call a taxi?"

I glanced out of the window; momentarily the rain had stopped, but the clouds were still scudding low before a high wind. "It's not raining now," I said. "You can walk it into town in ten minutes."

She flushed angrily. "All right, I'll go."

I showed her out, and she marched up the road picking her way between the puddles, an arrogant, slightly absurd middle-aged woman in a red suit and high-heeled, black patent leather shoes, most unsuitable for country walking. I went back into the sitting-room and poured myself another whisky from Johnnie Pascoe's bottle with a hand that shook with irritable anger. I sat down in his chair before the fire and lit a cigarette, to cool off for a few minutes before I went to bed. I knew I wouldn't sleep if I went to bed as angry as I was then.

That was a bad, spiteful woman, and I mustn't let her get under my skin. To tell a pilot of my age and experience that his flying was unsafe—that was a shrewd one, the stab of a woman in the habit of hurting.

I GOT up and moved around the room. There were other photographs of Johnnie Pascoe in the first World War that I had not examined. There was an informal group of about a dozen pilots standing in a meadow in summer weather, probably on the edge of an aerodrome, because a quaint, old-fashioned hut with a boarded end showed in the background. All the men were very young. Scrawled across the bottom of the photograph were the words, ST. OMER, 1918, in white ink that had faded to yellow.

I looked at it closely, and decided that Johnnie Pascoe was standing on the right. He had something round his neck that flopped down in a light streak on one shoulder, and I was puzzled over this aspect of his uniform for a few moments. It looked for all the world like a silk stocking.

So many photographs of the first war, all framed and hung close in a group upon one wall! When Johnnie Pascoe learned to fly, flying had been the greatest adventure the world had to offer, an adventure that led almost certainly to death. In the first World War the casualties in training pilots had been staggering. And when he was sent to France, a pilot went on flying two or even three missions on every fine day till he was killed, or else seriously wounded.

That had been the pattern of Johnnie Pascoe's life when that laughing photograph with Judy had been taken in front of the fighter. Everything that he had done in his first youth must be related to it. Marian Forbes would never have a clue, not if she lived to be a hundred.

I was growing sleepy now, and ready for bed. Marian Forbes had ceased to worry me. I went through into Johnnie's bedroom. There was a pair of clean pyjamas, Johnnie Pascoe's, laid out on the folded sheet. I threw off my clothes, put on Johnnie Pascoe's pyjamas, and got into his bed. I put out his bedside light and settled down to sleep, tired after thirty-six hours on the go. Outside, the wind was high and the rain still beat against the side of the small, exposed house, and drummed on the corrugated iron roof. We must get help to Johnnie Pascoe the instant there was a break in the weather, for Johnnie Pascoe was dying.

I was very near to sleep now, in Johnnie's bed and on his pillow. If he were to die, at any rate he would know that we were doing everything we could to help him, for he would come back to this small house beside this minor aerodrome, if a man goes anywhere beyond his death. This was his home, the only home he had, the shrine that held the treasured relics of his life. Somewhere in this bedroom with me would be . . . would be the Military Cross, in one of the drawers of his chest, perhaps. Somewhere there might be souvenirs of Judy . . . a silk stocking he had worn around his neck when flying, forty years ago.

Johnnie was very much in my mind as I finally drifted into sleep. And in my sleep came a dream in which I was Johnnie himself, in the days when he won that Military Cross, and fell in love with Judy. I was Johnnie Pascoe in his far-off, R.F.C. days. . . .

THOSE rotary engines . . . the Le Rhones, the Monos, and the Clergets! They were delightful to fly, the controls so light, the engines so smooth running. Up among the sunlit cumulus under the blue sky I could loop and roll and spin my Camel with the pressure of two fingers on the stick beside the button switch, which I used as little as possible. Remember that the Clerget lands very fast, at over forty miles an hour, and with that great engine in the nose the tail was light. Watch it. . . . Lovely.

I came to rest upon the grass in the bright sunshine; for an April day it was terrific, right out of the box. I let the motor die and pushed up my goggles and wiped the oil off my face with my silk scarf. Donk was on the tarmac with a lot of other people, girls, some of them. I jumped out of the cockpit and the oil was just right, even all the way round the cowling. It made her glisten, so that she looked wonderful.

Donk and Bose and Jerry came up with the girls. Bose said: "Meet the Hounslow Wonder. Flies upside down a darn sight better than right side up. Flies backwards, too, so the breeze can cool. . . ."

Donk said: "This is Daisy, and this is Lily, and this is Judy. This is Johnnie Pascoe."

The others were in ordinary clothes, but Judy was in uniform, a W.A.A.C., and she was lovely. My face was oily, so were my hands, and my old maternity just reeked of oil. I turned straight to her. "I'd like to shake hands, but I'll make you in a mess," I said. "Doing anything tonight?"

She laughed up at me. "Yes."

"Then put him off and come and have dinner with me at the Savoy."

She laughed again and shook her head.

Donk said: "She's in *Picardy Princess*. You remember the little French girl at the estaminet?"

I turned to her again. "You're not Judy Lester?"

She nodded, laughing.

I touched the sleeve of her uniform, and started walking on air. "But what's this in aid of?"

"Part time," she said. "I drive General Cadell around in the mornings."

I said: "Will you have supper with me after the show? I'll make a party."

"When?"

"Tonight."

She laughed again, adorably. "All right. But I go home at midnight."

"You won't tonight," I said. "What do you like to eat best?"

"Smoked salmon and ice cream."

"Tournedo in between?" She nodded and I said: "Can I pick you up at the stage door?"

When she smiled at me my heart turned over.

"What time?"

"Ten past eleven." And then she asked: "Is this your new aeroplane?"

I said: "Yes. I only got it yesterday. We're forming up a new squadron."

"Captain Boswell was saying that you shot down seven Germans."

"The eighth shot me down. I was lucky and got down behind our lines."

"Have you ever crashed?"

"Six times," I said. "The seventh is the lucky one. Do you drink champagne?"

She said: "Jiminy. Here's the general coming. I'll have to go."

I let her go. "Ten past eleven?"

She nodded, and ran quickly to the dark green Crossley tourer parked by the hangar. . . .

That afternoon I got my flight together for a dog-fight. For the first ten minutes Donk and Jerry and Tim Collins, a New Zealander, were to set on me and try and get me in their sights, and then I'd pull out while Jerry and Tim set on Donk and I watched. I wanted Tim to have a good work-out because he'd only just come down to us from the School of Aerial Fighting at Ayr.

AFTER the first ten minutes I pulled out at about ten thousand and Donk started in. I sat around a little way away, watching their mistakes to tell them on the ground, and so I saw it happen.

I suppose they got mad or something, because they both came in at the same moment, Tim only looking ahead and Jerry with Tim in the blind spot underneath the engine as he dived in on the same line. Jerry's wheels took Tim's top plane clean away and the rest of the wings collapsed, and there was just a heap of wreckage in the air, and Tim going down in the bare fuselage without any wings, Jerry flying round without any wheels, and Donk and me

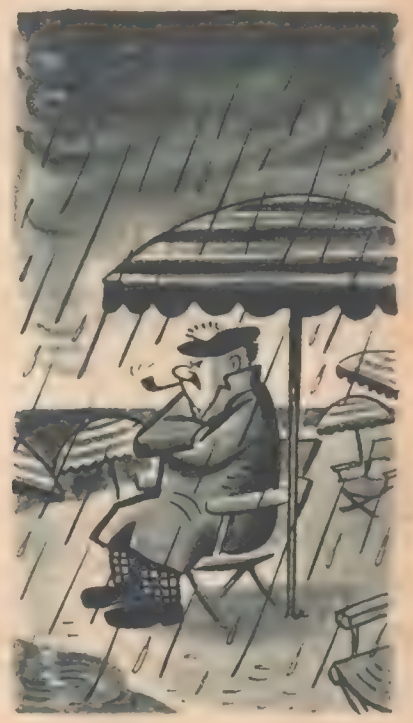
IN SHORT

Words Of Wisdom

I first reported for duty, after completing my training in India, to an Indian police officer of very much the old type and on the point of retirement. I was rather startled when he concluded the interview by saying, "My boy, there is always one thing you should remember, 'It is better to incur a slight reprimand than to perform an onerous duty.'"

SIR JOHN NOTT-BOWER,
Commissioner of Metropolitan Police

Starke's Holiday Guide Book



"Many seaside hotels include such facilities as use of private beaches in the tariffs. Make sure that you use them fully"

Gentleman On A Bus

I rose and gave a lady
  My seat, and got a smile,
And hoped she would not notice,
  As I walked down the aisle.

Yes, even as she thanked me,
  I hoped no one would warn her
That I, the man with manners,
  Had merely reached my corner.

RICHARD ARMOUR

Snap Shots

A Pembroke, Ontario, motorist inserted a coin in a parking meter in the town's business quarter. He got the jackpot. Coins to the value of over £2 tumbled out on the pavement.

Archie Enzler, a decorator in the Washington State town of Spokane, held an automatic paint spray gun to his ear to hear if it was working. It was. A hospital orderly and a doctor had to take turns at cleaning paint from Enzler's ear.

Twenty-nine months old Raymond Judd of Louisville, Kentucky, has been smoking two cigarettes a day for more than a year. The habit started when he found a smouldering "dog end" in an ash tray. The child also likes an occasional cigar—but cries loudly if it goes out.

Gardening

Isn't it about time we mowed the lawn, Daddy?
No.
I can hear Mr. Mulliner mowing his.
Let him.
Isn't it beautiful, Mr. Mulliner's garden?
Very nice.
I wish ours was like that, don't you?
No.
He's got more flowers than we have.
We've got more grass.
Do you like grass better than flowers?
Much better.
But it would be nice to have a few flowers to look at, wouldn't it?
We can look at Mr. Mulliner's.
Can you see them from your hammock?
Perfectly.
Can you see our bramble that he was complaining about? I said can you see our bramble——
No. I'm trying to read just now.
Isn't he funny complaining about our bramble? We never complain when his roses come over, do we?
Never.
Shall we cut off the dandelion heads? He doesn't like those much, either, does he?
When it gets cooler. Why don't you ride your bike for a bit?
Mummy told me not to go out.
Well, ride it in the garden.
I can't. The grass is too long. I said I can't, Daddy. The grass is too long——

LIONEL DAVIDSON

Other People's Letters

The people here are amazing from Churchill down, and if courage alone can win—the result will be inevitable. But they need our help desperately, and I am sure you will permit nothing to stand in the way. Some of the ministers and underlings are a bit trying, but no more than some I have seen.

Churchill is the government in every sense of the word—he controls the grand strategy and even the details—labour trusts him—the army, navy and air force are behind him to a man. The politicians and upper crust pretend to like him. I cannot emphasize too strongly that he is the one and only person over here with whom you need to have a full meeting of minds.

Churchill wants to see you—the sooner the better—but I have told him of your problem until the bill is passed. I am convinced this meeting between you and Churchill is essential—and soon—for the battering continues and Hitler doesn't wait for Congress.

Who wrote this letter? See foot of this column.

Boys About The House

Whose is this string and this half-finished thing
Of wood and wax and wire?
And who left a box and a pair of wet socks
To frizzle in front of the fire?
Who put a screw and a tube of glue
And a tattered handkerchief
Down on the floor by the scullery door—
And which of you was the thief
Who raided the sideboard and ate my pear?
Was it the one who got a tear
In the seat of his dungarees
From climbing the apple trees?

Who could it be who spilt the tea
And didn't wipe it up?
And who, do you think, was at the sink
And broke my little blue cup?
Why is a plate by the garden gate
And a blazer up on the wall?
Who left a dish of horrible fish
On the table in the hall?
Who borrowed my fountain pen again
And left the nail scissors out in the rain?
Is this a dead frog in my shoe?
John! Billy! Mark! WHERE ARE YOU?

HELEN MORGAN

The letter above was written by Harry L. Hopkins to President Roosevelt in January, 1941.

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fluttering about like a couple of wet hens.

Tim went into some greenhouses near Hanworth and made a hole four feet deep, and Donk and I shepherded Jerry back to Hounslow where he made a belly landing in the middle of the field and stepped out unhurt; his Camel was repairable. All we wanted was one new Camel and one new pilot. Jerry was all cut up and talking a lot of nonsense, so I put him into my machine and sent him up to practise aerobatics, telling him I'd have his hide if he bent it, while I went off to see the C.O.

We fixed the funeral for Friday at Feltham and I said I'd write to his folks in New Zealand. I waited till Jerry got down in my Camel, with a bottle of egg-nog in each pocket of my overcoat, and when I'd satisfied myself he hadn't done my Camel any harm, we had an egg-nog in the hangar. Then Donk came along and we had another, and then Bose came so we had another, and by that time things didn't look so bad. We all went into Town by tube and got out at Piccadilly.

We got a beautiful wreath for Timmy at the florists, from the squadron, ten guineas, and I told them where to send it. And then there were so many lovely flowers in the shop I got a bright idea, and I told the duchess who was serving us I wanted a bouquet. A really nice one, carnations and things. She said in her funeral voice: "To go with the wreath, sir?"

"No," I said. "This is another thing again. This is for a lady on the stage. In *Picardy Princess*. I want it to hand up across the footlights, so let's make it good."

She gave me a dirty look as if she were the second gravedigger, but she'd had ten guineas off us and she could see another five coming, so she got busy with the carnations and the fern. We got behind a stand of pot-plants where I thought she couldn't see us and had another egg-nog. When I got my bouquet it was gorgeous. all pink and white and green and done up with silver paper round the bottom.

They hadn't got any seats for *Picardy Princess* that night, not one in the whole house, but they'd got a box, so I took that. I might have filled it up with the others but I didn't; I wanted to look at her alone. So I didn't tell them anything about it but just said I'd join up with them at the Savoy, and sneaked out to the theatre alone.

I felt awfully conspicuous alone in the box and wished I'd brought the others with me, and I think she knew that because she spotted me almost immediately and sang her two songs straight at me, so that the audience began to turn and look and laugh, because they could see I was in the Flying Corps and that I'd got the M.C. and Croix de Guerre.

To top it off, after the grand finale, when the attendant took my bouquet up and handed it to her across the footlights she buried her face in it, and then looked up laughing, and blew a kiss at me. I stood up in the box and blew one back at her, and that brought the house down, of course. Then I went round to the stage door at the back, waiting for her, in my new trench coat.

She came hurrying out and dragged me back into the dressing-room she shared with two other girls to show me the bouquet as her dresser had put it out in a great vase. She insisted on giving me a buttonhole from her bouquet to wear at the Savoy, but my coat hadn't got a buttonhole to put it in so she tucked the flower into the strap of my Sam Browne. I waited while she did up her face, and helped her into her coat, and then we were off, chattering and chi-hiking together, to the taxi I had waiting, walking on air.

The crowd were all at the Savoy when we got there and the party was in full swing, and they chipped us about having tarried on the way, which we hadn't—much. I took Judy in my arms for the first time as we danced together, and we liked it, and did it again, and again, with only a pause now and then to nibble a bit of smoked salmon or take a gulp of champagne as we rubbed knees under the table. Then, before we'd hardly got started to get to know each other, the band was playing "God Save The King."

I got Judy into a taxi and took her to the flat in St. John's Wood that she shared with another girl, and she lay in my arms all the way while we kissed, and it wasn't nearly long enough. . . .

* * *

I was writing to Timmy's mother in Palmerston North, wherever that may be, next morning, and saying what a terrible loss he was to the squadron—the standard sort of letter—when Donk came in with the news that Chuck Patterson was killed, up at Waddington. Chuck and I were in the same year at McGill together, doing first year engineering, and we joined up on the

same day. This sure is a rough sort of war.

Flowers for Judy.

Funerals, and firing parties. "Rest on your arms reversed. . . ."

Dancing with Judy, and the softness of her against my uniform.

The fun of that early summer, and the laughter, and the deaths. . . . The day we had together down at Henley in the punt, when we changed into bathing things among the bushes and went swimming in the river, and I took one of her stockings so she had to take the other off and go back to London without any stockings on at all: Judy Lester, in *Picardy Princess*. The footlights, and the songs. . . .

Dancing with Judy. "If you were the only girl in the world. . . ." The Bing Boys, and George Robey.

The day we got our orders for going to France in ten days' time, the day I didn't have a drink all day but picked up Judy at ten-past eleven at the stage door and walked her out under the trees of Leicester Square among all the tarts, and took her in my arms and told her, and asked her to marry me.

Judy.

The exhibition of formation flying and stunt flying that we put on for a bunch of brass hats from the War Office, nineteen of us at full squadron strength. The pilot from South Africa with ginger hair who got his fin and rudder taken off by Ben's propeller and went spinning slowly down doing everything he knew to get control again, although he must have known that you can never hope to fly a Camel without rudder because of the gyroscopic torque. The explosion when the tank burst as he hit the ground and the great column of black smoke that acted as a windsock for us all to land by, all eighteen of us.

The Australian from Bendigo, Tom Foreman, who "went crook" in front of the generals because we don't have parachutes and the Germans do. . . .

The special licence. Judy.

The military funeral at Feltham in the morning. the Union Jack over the coffin on the gun carriage; the Dead March, the muffled drums, the firing squad, the prayers. The frantic rush back to the flat for a bite to eat and a couple of drinks before getting married to Judy in the afternoon; the flowers, the old slipper, the confetti at the railway carriage. Skindles at Maidenhead, the calm summer evening, and Judy.

Judy.

The breakfast tray in bed with the sun streaming in on us. The familiar hiss and crackle of a flock of Clerget Camels that brought us hopping out of bed and out on the veranda in our night things as the squadron peeled off one by one and started in to beat up Skindles. Jerry doing a full roll below the level of our window, Donk running his wheels along the river so that they made two light furrows on the water for a hundred yards and set the moored punts rocking, Bose going through the telephone line and taking away a length of it streaming from his undercarriage. The blipping engines, the waving pilots, the startled onlookers, and Judy waving at them in her nightie in the sun. . . .

Judy.

Judy back in the show that evening, and the whole squadron in the stalls chi-hiking at us and Judy ad-libbing back at them across the footlights, the laughter, and the fun.

The four of them that set on me during the grand finale and dragged me out and through the little door and shoved me on the stage beside her, the glare of the footlights; the welcome from Daisy Holmes, the leading lady, as she gave us the centre of the stage, the orchestra switching from the grand finale to the "Wedding March," the shouts and the laughter and the cheers from the audience, the many curtains. The impromptu supper on the stage with all the cast and all the squadron, the champagne, the toasts.

The quiet of the night drive through the moonlit streets of London in an open taxi to the flat in Kensington that I had for the next four days, alone, with Judy.

Judy.

THE hectic rush to get the squadron fit for operations in the next three days, the lining up of sights upon the new machines, the swinging of the compasses. The new pilot who was posted down to us from Ayr to replace the South African, a pink and white boy called Phil Thomas with only twenty-six hours solo flying up in all, only twelve on Camels. The row I had with the C.O. when he was posted to my flight, because it would be just like murder out in France.

Judy.

The early breakfast on the last morning, the serious last kisses, the little gifts, the promises to write. The parade upon the tarmac with all the machines lined up, the speech from the general, the girls and the relations in the background. The sea crossing from Lympne.

Judy, who now seemed so far away.

The first patrol across the lines, leading my new flight. The three Fokkers two thousand feet below, the dive in to attack with our six Camels, the hideous surprise when they just put their noses up and climbed away from us till they were on top and in the sun and diving down on us. These new D.VIIs can certainly outfly our Clerget Camels.

Writing to Judy, telling her about the piano we got for the mess to play her songs on.

Phil Thomas dead. Diving on a two-seat L.V.G. over Sailly that was escorted by two Fokkers, and then jumped on by four or five more Fokkers that came down out of the clouds. Telling the major when we landed that I'd said he wouldn't last a fortnight, and he hadn't

Writing to Judy, telling her what a pretty little town Gravelines is. Waiting for a letter from her, but she hasn't written yet.

Bose missing, and Bose turning up again after being shot down in flames. The arrival of four pilots straight from Ayr. All English, all under twenty, one of them, Peter Stanley, with only thirty-one hours solo. God help him, because we can't do much about it.

A letter from Judy! Four pages, but she writes pretty big. She's not sure, but she thinks she's going to have a baby.

I sure wish I hadn't done it. Writing to Judy to say that's marvellous.

Peter Stanley killed upon his first patrol. A Pfalz. God didn't help him and I couldn't. But I got a Fokker, certain, which makes nine. Drinks in the mess.

Getting the woofits now, because I don't sleep so good. Bose back and flying with his hand in bandages—they tried to send him home but he won't go. The little black haired Irish girl that he got tangled up with at the hospital. That's bad luck, because it takes your mind off flying and you can't have that when you're on Camels in this year of grace.

Pancaking my Camel coming in to land after a patrol and wiping off the undercarriage. Saying it was because I got shot up, and knowing it was really just bad flying. The third Camel that I've used up since we came out here. Hoping that we'll come to the end of them, and get on Dolphins.

Bose missing, believed killed. He had his flight out on patrol and jumped a solitary Pfalz, but it was there as a decoy and about ten Fokkers came down out of the sun. Don Curtis was shot down and killed, and Bose last seen going down with smoke pouring out and two Fokkers following him down to finish him off. Nobody saw him crash, but he won't get away with that one.

Writing to Mrs. Boswell. Bose was older than the rest of us, and had two kids. A schoolmaster. Every time I get to sleep I wake up with a jerk, and then I can't sleep again until I've had a drink. Going to the hospital to tell the little Irish nurse. I think she'll be consolable.

Going out alone before dawn and sneaking across the lines, hedgehopping in the first light. Found a Jerry aerodrome with a Rumpler taking off and took it head on at about five hundred feet, put a burst in its belly and went underneath. Saw it crash in flames. Eleven.

Trying to write to Judy, but my hand

Car Kaleidoscope

A rivulet of glowing colour
Gleaming in the midday sun;
Moving inexorably forward,
A myriad cars on a Sunday run.

Nose to tail, flashing, sparkling,
Like the rapids leaping past;
Shooting forward, overtaking,
Braking sharply, stopping fast.

Caught awhile in a quiet eddy,
A rainbow stream of multi hues;
Stopping, starting, scarcely
moving,
Seeming part of the unchanging
view.

Spilling forward with unleashed
abandon,
A surge of roaring energy;
An ever changing, varied pattern,
With one design: to reach the sea.

R. A. JONES

MEN!

Do you pass the two-lip test?

See page 32

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"It all started because your Johnny hit my Robert because Robert had kicked Richard because Richard had pushed Patrick because Patrick trod on little Tommy's foot"

was shaking so I gave it up and anyway I couldn't think of anything to say. Sandy McPhail got shot up and crash-landed behind our lines. In hospital, but he'll recover. Took off one leg.

Getting five Fokkers in one day, and losing the major and Tom Foreman. Five must be pretty near a record. They're sending us Cy Hampton from 74 to be our new C.O. Of all nineteen of us who flew to France two months ago there's only Donkin and Jim Curtis left, and me. I hardly know the names of some of the mess, they come and go so quick. Cy thinks they'll send us back to England to get re-equipped with Dolphins. If so, I'd see Judy and get to know about the baby. I've only had one letter but I've written a lot of times, I think.

Lying awake from midnight until half past three and then going out in the moonlight with a bottle of gin to try and get another Rumpler. The dew upon my flying boots, the gin in my mouth. Contact, and the men swinging on the prop, the swish and crackle, the spitting back, the blipping till she warmed. The chocks away, the take-off down the field in the half light. Testing the guns hedgehopping across the lines.

The ground fire, much worse than before. Machine guns everywhere, all spitting flame at me. God, this is bad. Must, must keep low. They hit then, several times, but not me. Over those trees and down low to the fields. Gunners ahead of me, so let them have a burst. They're everywhere. Hit again then, and now smoke coming from the engine. That'll be an oil pipe. Heading west now from this shambles towards our lines. Full bore, but the motor dying—only seven hundred revs. Hit again in the tail, several times, can hardly keep her in the air. Wham—my leg. Motor stopped, prop stationary, this is it.

Switches off, petrol off, down into this field. The firing has stopped. Too short and all shell holes. Pancake down, undercarriage collapses, skidding along, the cracking of the timbers. Tip on the nose and crack my head upon the guns, then she falls back right side up. Blood streaming down my face, blood in my flying boot and down my leg. The grey clad, running soldiers in the grey dawn.

The ambulance, the hospital at Ghent, the German nurses, the morphia, the deep, peaceful sleep. Waking only when they came to dress my leg and my face, and then sleeping again. Sleeping for three days and nights, they said.

The Red Cross visitor, the messages through Switzerland to Judy and to Mother back in Hamilton, Ontario. The long journey to the prison camp at Burgwedel near Hanover. The prison camp. The weary months.

The letter from Judy in October that had taken three months to reach me, telling me the baby would be born in February.

The cold, the weary days, the snow, the prison camp.

THE Armistice, the cheering and rejoicing, the sullen German officers, the train to the Dutch frontier town, the English and American voices. The sea crossing to Harwich, the room at the Piccadilly Hotel, the trunk that I had left with Cox and King's with a new uniform in it. The tube journey to Golders Green, the bus to the small house where Judy was living with her mother.

Judy.

Judy, changed and pale and irritable and out of work. Her mother hard and hostile, pointing out that I was out of work, too. Judy refusing to come up to Town or to be seen anywhere until the baby arrived, because of her career.

Judy refusing to come back to Canada with me for my demobilization, because of her career in London.

Judy refusing to come away with me for a short holiday.

Judy crying and in a temper.

Judy.

The Piccadilly Hotel, and Donkin, Major Donkin now. Going down with him to Roehampton to see Sandy walking on his dummy leg. The talk of ghosts, the whiskies and the gins. The second visit to Judy, worse than the first.

Judy.

The crossing on the overcrowded ship to Halifax, four in one cabin, the poker and the drinks. The visit to the Air Force Headquarters in Ottawa, the demobilization, the gratuity. Arriving home at Hamilton, the crowded platform at the depot, the reporters, the photographers. Mother, and Sis, and home, so little and so very much the same. The demands that I should tell them about Judy.

Judy.

The ship back to Liverpool, third-class, husbanding my little store of

money. The journey to London, the small hotel near Euston, dirty, cheap. Judy, irritable and waiting for the baby. Judy suggesting that I'd better try and find a job. Judy full of plans for a new show as soon as her figure was back to normal.

Judy.

The desperate search for a job, with all the other ex-officers. The high ideas to start with, seven hundred a year, the demands for qualifications, for experience of business, the drop to four hundred, to four pounds a week. The job in Great Portland Street selling second-hand cars on commission that did not pay expenses. The windscreen wiper job. The tyre re-capping job. The visits to the aerodromes, Hendon, Cricklewood, Stag Lane.

Judy in the nursing home, better tempered, thankful it was over. Judy preparing to park the baby with her mother till she could afford a nurse for it, the baby red and wrinkled. Judy full of plans for a new show. The sense of being out of things, completely.

Judy with a leading part in *Lucky Lady*, musical, seventy pounds a week. Judy taking on a nurse and moving to a flat in Hampstead. Judy with her name in lights in Leicester Square.

Judy.

The air-minded suburban clothier at Streatham, prepared to buy an Avro to do seaside joy-riding if I would fly it for him. Three pounds a week and twenty per cent of the takings after expenses were paid. The joy of the chance to get flying again. The trouble with Judy.

Judy offering me seven pounds a week as her publicity manager.

The quarrel with Judy.

The success of *Lucky Lady*.

Judy.

The Avro with its blipping, Monosoupape engine, purchased for scrap price, seventy pounds. The one ground engineer and the one boy. The tent beside it, on the beaches, in the fields. The placards with my picture on them, the dare-devil ace, the eleven victories, the Military Cross. The warm-hearted little clothier from Streatham, delighted with the success of his first venture into

COMPLIMENTS—I

Never praise a sister to a sister in the hope of your compliments reaching the proper ears.

Rudyard Kipling

show business. The one visit from Judy, her lip curled a little.

Judy Lester, in *Lucky Lady*.

Judy.

The crowds, the blipping engine, the smell of castor oil, the ceaseless take-offs and landings over hedges in small fields, the seven-minute flights, the gaping crowds the endless photographs in front of the machine.

Judy with a Hollywood contract. Reading about it in the paper in the tent in a wet field on a wet day. Telephoning Judy.

Judy.

Judy leaving for America, with her mother and the baby and the nurse. The stilted goodbye at Waterloo Station, the sense of being out of place in the theatrical crowd to see her off. The knowledge then that we might never meet again.

The warm-hearted little clothier. "You forget her, see? She got no use for you. She come to a bad end, boy. You just wait."

Judy.

The second Avro, and the second pilot, the third engineer.

The film of *Lucky Lady*.

The letter from the lawyer at Reno, Nevada, telling me that Judy Pascoe was suing for divorce citing desertion, asking if I intended to contest the suit.

Judy. . . .

I woke in the darkness in the little windswept house beside the aerodrome in Tasmania. My face and Johnnie Pascoe's pillow were all wet with tears.

To be continued next week

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Gas—hot water makes life easy!

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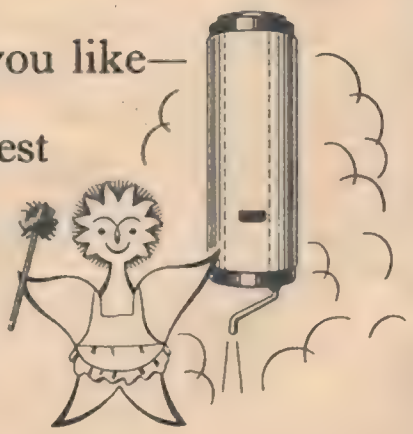

You'll bless the day Gas came to stay!

ISSUED BY THE GAS COUNCIL

Wheels separated by mere inches, three trotters thrill the 20,000 crowd at the Appleby race track

The breakneck charioteers

thunder by

by MARK WILSON

Danger rides the sulkies jostling on the bends. Trotting sounds slow . . . but the thrills come fast

IN a trotting race at Moorside Stadium, near Manchester, early this year, the horses, pulling light sulkies, were drumming round the track at top speed—about 27-28 m.p.h. David Douglas, one of the sport's leading drivers, was lying second.

As he was about to challenge the leading horse, it stumbled and fell. Douglas snatched his horse to one side, but the sulkies collided. Douglas was jolted from his seat and thrown on the track in the path of the following horses. Flying hooves flashed past his head, and a sulky wheel passed over his body.

Douglas was lucky to escape with a severe shaking and grazes. The race was won by the horse which was last at the time of the accident. "He was the only one of six able to keep clear of trouble," says Douglas.

Such reversals of chance are common in a sport which is enjoying a revival of popularity in Britain. At several northern tracks meetings are held regularly from February to November. Throughout the summer months there are meetings every week at county fairs and agricultural shows.

On Whit-Monday more than twenty thousand people watched the annual meeting at Appleby in Westmorland. The "Derby" of trotting is held on the Musselburgh race track, near Edinburgh, on August Bank Holiday every year.

Other countries where trotting is very popular include America, Australia and New Zealand, Canada, France, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Germany, Austria, Norway, Sweden, and Russia, where many races are held on snow and ice. In many of these countries there are special races for women drivers. In France there are races for saddled trotters only.

Riding a trotter at top speed for a mile and a half is hard work, says Douglas. He doubts if there are any riders capable of competing in two consecutive races of this type, with only the half an hour interval that "galloping jockeys" get.

The horses which compete in "trotting" races may be either trotters or pacers. In a pacer the legs on each side of the body move together, whereas a trotter moves the diagonally opposite legs together. While it is possible to train any horse to move fast with either of these gaits, only horses bred from racing trotters or pacers ever achieve the necessary speed for competition, and then only after training from an early age, as thoroughbreds are trained for the racecourse.

Some authorities hold that neither pacing nor trotting is a natural gait for a horse. Douglas says that this is untrue. "Foals bred from trotters and thoroughbreds show a distinct preference for trotting rather than galloping." Last year he bred a foal whose sire and dam were both pacers. When it was only two days old and still wobbly on its legs, it came out of the stable to look for its mother and paced thirty yards to her.

Pacers are very slightly faster than trotters. The world record for trotters over a mile is 1 min. 55¼ sec., and for pacers 1 min. 55 sec. Both these records were made in America. The record speed for a mile in Britain is 2 min. 9 sec. by a pacer.

Throughout a race the horse must maintain

Driver David Douglas chats with two owners. Recently he was lucky to escape with his life in a trotting mishap

MEN!

Do you pass the two-lip test?

See page 32

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DeWitt's PILLS

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(signed) F. P. Butt (letter KB705)

De Witt's Pills stimulate kidney action to clear out harmful impurities that **cause** your aches and pains. From chemists. 2/1, 4/2 and 6/9

its correct gait. If it changes step to a gallop, and so gains ground, it is disqualified. Most races are for driven horses pulling sulkies, but at some country meetings horses ridden by jockeys are allowed to compete against driven horses.

Douglas was once riding in one of these races when the horse in front slipped and fell. It brought down several others, including Douglas's mount. One jockey was killed, and Douglas recovered consciousness in hospital with injuries which kept him there several weeks.

Douglas, a forty-year-old Scot from Musselburgh, has been training and driving trotting horses for more than twenty years. He considers it the most exciting form of horse-racing. "In steeplechasing you know when to expect the thrills," he says. "But in trotting anything can happen at any time."

At Moorside this summer Douglas was leading in a mile race when the sulky shafts broke twenty yards from the winning post. He managed to keep the horse on its feet and was sufficiently far ahead to get past the post first. The previous week, using the same sulky, he had won a mile race round a quarter of a mile track with tight bends.

"Speed round the bends puts a severe strain on the sulky frame and shafts," he says. "The fault must have developed in that race. The track was narrow, and if they had broken during that race there would have been a bad accident."

Trotting races are held on quarter or half-mile circuits. Enthusiasts claim this as one of its great attractions. "From start to finish you can see everything that happens in the race," says Ben Moreton, a Lancashire factory owner who has five trotting horses.

According to Douglas it requires great skill to drive a horse at top speed and keep it perfectly balanced throughout a race. "Bad handling can ruin a horse's chances by exhausting it before the end of the race."

When a horse cuts in front of another, or when a driver tries to squeeze through in "tight quarters," the horse may put a foot through the wheel of the sulky in front. This causes the worst accidents in trotting, says Douglas. The two horses concerned are brought down, and those immediately following are unable to avoid them.

At one meeting six horses were involved in a crash of this sort. Officials had to saw through parts of the sulkies before they were all freed. One horse had a broken leg and had to be destroyed on the course, and one driver broke his left arm and was out of the sport for six months.

Sometimes the risk lies in the character of the horse. Douglas had one very fast horse which was prone to jump at anything. "He would try to jump a shadow on the track." There is always a danger that a horse which jumps or "breaks"—that is, changes to a gallop when trotting at speed—will tangle its legs or lose balance, says Douglas.

In one saddle race Douglas was leading comfortably when a piece of paper blew across the track. The horse tried to jump it and fell. Douglas was thrown heavily and lost the race.

Hugging the inside of the track saves a lot of distance in a long race, says Douglas, but it is dangerous. Drivers have often been thrown out when a sulky wheel hit a post. Country tracks have their own hazards. At Appleby the track runs alongside the River Eden. Last year a driver who challenged on a bend swept too wide and found himself out of the race, down the bank, and practically in the river.

It costs about £600 to replace a good horse, sulky, and harness. Racing sulkies are built of hickory and ash, and weigh about thirty pounds. The wheels look like cycle wheels but have larger hubs, and wider angled spokes to take the strain on corners.

When an engineer friend suggested that Douglas might gain a few yards by having a lighter wheel built like that of a racing cycle, he agreed to try it. The wheels were fitted with tyres with fifty pounds pressure.

COMPLIMENTS—2

A woman not pretty might be handsome if somebody had kept telling her that she was pretty.

J. B. Priestley

Douglas used them in a race in which he drove a fancied horse, but the tyres proved too hard, and half-way through the race the wheels collapsed as the spokes buckled because of constant jarring.

Tactics in a trotting race are similar to those in cycle sprints and middle-distance running, says Douglas. "A lot of the art is in getting 'first run' at another driver."

This means bringing the horse into "top gear" for a sprint that carries him past another driver before he has time to gather his horse and strike back. This can happen several times in one race as drivers seek the best positions for the bends.

Douglas feels that there is more thrill in driving a fast horse than in driving a fast car. He was once driving a pacing mare down Leith Walk, Edinburgh, when he met an acquaintance who asked him for a lift. The man earned his living as a Wall of Death rider. "We hadn't gone more than a couple of hundred yards when he began to shout 'She'll fall, she'll fall. Let me get down,'" says Douglas. "I had to put him down. He was scared that the horse would slip on the hard road."

The cost of keeping a trotter in training is about £4 a week. The owner also has to pay entry fees of about £2 for each race. Every fortnight the horse needs new shoes, at 30s. a set. A good horse will race every week throughout the season, and repeat its times almost exactly, says Douglas. Good trotters are characterized by stamina, intelligence, and docility. The world's fastest trotter used to be driven to meetings by its owner's eleven-year-old daughter.

Douglas trains at Moorside Stadium, where the racing manager is George Dodd. Now seventy, Dodd has been training and driving trotting horses for sixty years, and is still considered the best driver in the sport. He won the big race at Musselburgh last year, and at Appleby this year.

Like so many other sports, trotting began in England. In the early part of the nineteenth century, sportsmen and farmers in the north and east matched their best horses against each other in long distance road races. Racing on a track, in imitation of the American style, was introduced here in about 1876.

Trotting is extremely popular in America, says Dodd, where several races are far more valuable than our Derby. The prize money for the richest, the Eastern Championship Pace, is 75,000 dollars. Last year a famous horse was sold for half a million dollars to go to stud.

In America drivers going all out for big prizes have made the sport more dangerous than it is here. There have been spectacular crashes and some severe accidents in the past few years. Fibre glass helmets with foam rubber cushions were recently introduced as a safety measure, after two drivers were taken to hospital with injuries received in a five horse crash.

The tradition of matching trotting horses is not altogether dead in this country. Last year William Ayres, of Chesterfield, matched his American-bred Makeway, against Starlight, belonging to Mr. Forest of Glasgow, for £500 a side, winner take all. Starlight won.

Another enthusiast went one better. He matched his horse against a Lagonda car. The winning post was a local pub. The horse started from a pub in a village two miles away, and at the same moment the car started from a pub in another village five miles away. Although the car touched eighty miles an hour, the horse won by twelve seconds. THE END

Stunt man

Continued from page 15

sprains. One of his supporters told him that he had overcome a similar weakness by wearing boots. Hailsham tried boots, liked them and has worn them ever since, even with his customary bowler.

When a highly successful barrister, he caused a number of eyebrows to be raised by cycling the eight miles from his Putney home to his chambers in the Temple. He explained that his car had broken down and that he preferred fresh air to public transport.

Sometimes his eccentricities have been misinterpreted.

At the last Conservative conference many newspapers carried pictures of him stepping briskly from the sea at 7 a.m., his torso oozing out of his bathing-trunks. His opponents said he did it for the publicity. But for years he had always taken early-morning bathes while staying near the coast. He saw no reason for not doing so just because a few photographers were around.

For new gadgets he still has the enthusiasm of a boy at preparatory school.

"He loves ploughing about in his orchard with his new motor-scythe," says Hinchingbrooke.

Hailsham has failed to grow up in another sense. Though he delights in attacking other people, he is extremely sensitive to attacks on himself. During the 1945 election he was so upset by a mistake of his opponent, Frank Pakenham, that he sent him a note: "I think it will be better if we communicate through our agents." Last year Joseph Grimond, the Liberal leader who had been in chambers with him, called him in the House of Commons "a poor little mixed-up kid." Next day he received a curt note telling him that their friendship was at an end.

In spite of his foibles, civil servants like Hailsham. He masters complicated briefs quickly, makes firm decisions and scribbles them in the margins in a vigorous italic hand. He has definite views on almost everything.

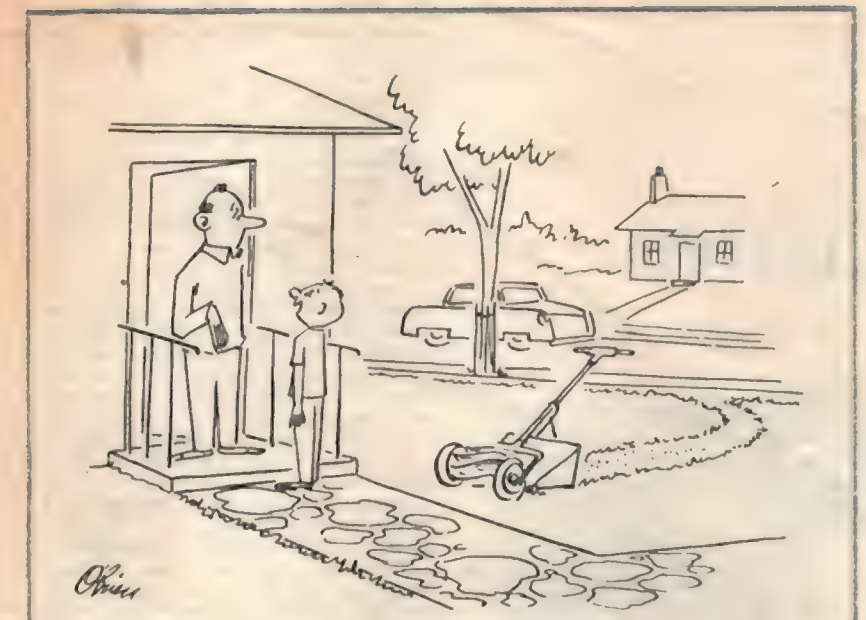
He has an enormous aptitude for work. In one week he has made as many as eight major speeches. When he led the British delegation to last year's Jamestown Festival in America (at his own expense), he would return to his hotel room around midnight after the last engagement of the day, and start work on the following day's speeches and press releases. He would turn in at 2 a.m. and get up again about three hours later, working until his first engagement at 9 a.m. During the whole trip he had an average of four hours' sleep a night.

He is also adept at speaking off the cuff. During his American trip he was unexpectedly presented with an illuminated address at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg. He dazzled his hosts with a spontaneous and neatly turned speech of thanks—in Latin.

Despite his title, Hailsham still thinks of himself as belonging to the professional classes into which he was born. His grandfather was Quintin Hogg, the educational pioneer who built the Regent Street and Woolwich Polytechnics. His father was Sir Douglas Hogg, K.C., who became War Minister and later Lord Chancellor. Hailsham himself was born into "a typical upper-middle-class home run by a moderate army of servants."

His education began young. Every evening his father came up to the nursery and talked to him about history, politics and the law. "By the time I went to prep school, I knew that slander is not actionable *per se* except in three cases."

His father had also weaned him from "the Liberal and Socialist leanings that any other intelligent child



"Mow your lawn, mister?"

would have" and had convinced him of "the rightness of Conservatism."

Like most prep schools of the period, Sunningdale prided itself on its austerity. But despite the cold baths, earth-closets and savage first World War food rationing, young Hogg was happy. "I found I had the uncanny knack of being able to pass exams top. It was the same all the way to the Bar Finals. I had the knack of being able to see into the examiner's mind."

At Eton on a scholarship he won his school colours at football, became auditor of Pop, then mainly a debating society, and in 1924 made his first public speech in support of Annesley Ashworth Somerville, a master who was contesting Windsor. But already he was beginning to show signs of the intellectual arrogance which he has thrown off only in recent years. Anxious to win the keenly contested Newcastle Scholarship, he pinned a notice on his study door: "Do not disturb. Working for the Newcastle."

The fact that he won it did not make him any more popular.

At Oxford he was probably the most brilliant scholar of the century. He took a double first and is said to have got more alphas in his Greats than any man since Gladstone. Until recently he was the only man since 1900 to achieve both the Presidency of the Union and a fellowship of All Souls.

He would have been more popular if he had been less openly ambitious. On the day his father accepted a peerage, he told a friend with tears in his eyes: "He's done it without consulting me. It will interfere with my political career." Nobody missed the implication that even then, at twenty-two, he saw himself as a future prime minister.

At All Souls he was even less popular. Out of tune with the Popular Front tendencies of most of his colleagues, he quickly built up a reputation for pugnacity. "One had the impression that when he came into a room he looked round to see whom he could best attack," says a contemporary. "He murdered any conversation. After a short time, he would work himself into a paroxysm and literally throw himself about."

Meanwhile, having taken the expected first in his Bar Finals, Hogg was making his way as a barrister. He argued his first case in the Court of Appeal before Lord Justice Scrutton, "a fierce old man with a beard." He recalls: "I had been given the papers the night before and it was obviously unwinnable. The judge listened to me for half an hour and when I ran dry, said I had made all the points that could be made. He then gave judgment against me. He was extremely courteous."

Very soon Hogg was known as a coming man and, in 1938, was adopted as Conservative candidate for the Oxford by-election. The issue was Munich. Hogg took the official line (which he usually takes) and the people who opposed it rallied behind David Lindsay, the master of Balliol, who stood as an independent. Posters appeared saying: "A vote for Hogg is a vote for Hitler." But Hogg won comfortably.

He still defends his attitude. "Public opinion wouldn't have accepted war at that time," he says. "And in any case, our eight-gun fighters weren't ready. If we'd fought in 1938, Hitler would not have been beaten."

When war did come, Hogg was commissioned in the Rifle Brigade and posted to Egypt. Of a round-up of 130 Italian prisoners near Tobruk, his regimental history reports: "Quintin Hogg, dressed in ill-fitting shirt and shorts and a topi, brandishing his pistol in a very dangerous manner, took charge of them." Shortly afterwards he was seriously wounded and invalided home. He now exercised his option of resuming his seat in Parliament.

IT was 1943. Hogg quickly allied himself with Hinchingbrooke and Peter Thorneycroft in the Tory Reform movement. "Our aim was to get the party to accept modern principles of social justice—a health service, social insurance, a certain degree of planning and an end to unemployment," says Hinchingbrooke. "Hogg lent a new dynamism to our councils."

After a short period as Under-Secretary for Air in the Caretaker Government, Hogg pursued his rumbustious Commons career and on one occasion called into question Winston Churchill's leadership of the Opposition.

Hogg was also building his reputation at the Bar. Believing that before the war the intellectual case for Conservatism had been lost by default, he wrote *The Case For Conservatism* and several polemics. He was writing law books and newspaper articles and making his name as a broadcaster.

In 1950 the moment arrived which Hogg had been dreading for more than twenty years. His father died and he was dragged struggling to the Lords. His letters to Clement Attlee demanding legislation to excuse eldest sons from succeeding their fathers in the Upper House were so petulant that he lost the sympathy of even his friends. "It seemed to us an unnecessarily extravagant way of going about it," says Hinchingbrooke.

In some ways Hailsham has never been able to adjust himself to the slower tempo of the House of Lords. "He's a character," says one M.P., "a real, good House of Commons chap. But eccentricity doesn't go down so well in the Lords." Pakenham adds: "He succeeds in the Lords by his comic genius. He hasn't yet got the ear of the House as a serious speaker."

In 1956 Hailsham became First Lord of the Admiralty. It was the time of

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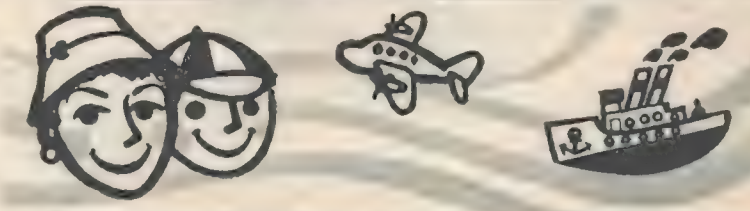

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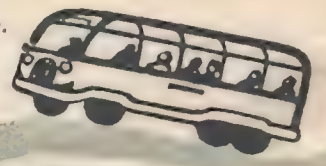

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the Suez engagement. After four spectacular months he was moved to the Ministry of Education where he won a name as a sound administrator who was eager to fight for an enlightened education policy inside the Cabinet. Last year he became Lord President of the Council so that he could give more time to his party activities.

Unlike many ministers, Hailsham tries to keep politics out of his home. He fiercely guards his ex-directory telephone number, rarely invites officials to his house and never gives political parties. As far as possible he avoids taking work home and makes it known that interruptions of his evenings and weekends are not welcome. "We fight for our weekends," says Lady Hailsham. "At the moment, about one in three are messed up."

His home life is rich. Lady Hailsham, a beautiful, charming and vivacious woman whom he married after divorcing his first wife in 1944, says: "I don't allow any bad temper or depression to last long in this house." Besides twelve-year-old Douglas at Eton, they have three younger children at home. Hinchingbrooke, who is an occasional visitor, says: "The house is a great mass of romping children, gramophones and railways. Even he finds it hard to get a word in."

Most weeks Hailsham manages to spend two or three nights at home. When not working, he composes verses (some of which have been published), watches B.B.C. television ("Our set is too old to convert to ITV") or reads anything from Greek to books borrowed from the children. He does not smoke, is cutting down on drink and eats anything that is easily digested. When allowed, he is liable to make deep inroads in a box of chocolates.

The house itself is large and fairly modern and stands in a quarter of an acre of land. With two full-time servants, Lady Hailsham says that it "runs itself."

At weekends and holidays they all pile into their two elderly cars—mother's "Greenie" and father's "Blackie"—and drive out to their hundred-acre dairy farm at Hailsham, Sussex. Besides their T.T. pedigree Jersey herd, they have thirty sheep whose lambs they hope to sell, and a small orchard. Adjoining, they have a two-acre market garden which specializes in daffodils, lettuce and strawberries.

Hailsham is deeply religious. In London he attends St. Margaret's, Westminster, the parish church of Parliament. In the country he often reads the lesson at Hurstmonceaux Parish Church. He is godfather to Hinchingbrooke's eldest son and takes his duties seriously.

Few people would care to predict Lord Hailsham's political future. Many think that he is assured of at least the Woolsack and that a change in the law may even make it possible for him to resume a seat in the Commons and become Prime Minister. Others believe that he has already made himself such a buffoon that all further progress is barred. They also doubt his ability to stay on sufficiently good terms with his colleagues.

Even more doubtful is his ability to stay on sufficiently good terms with the voters. After the Conservative failure at Rochdale he said: "I couldn't care less. It's no great bother. I did my job—it was the voters who didn't do theirs."

Hugh Delargy, M.P., commented recently: "Hailsham is worth a million votes to Labour." THE END

COMPLIMENTS—3

By taking a second wife a man pays the highest compliment to the first, by showing that she made him so happy as a married man that he wishes to be so a second time.

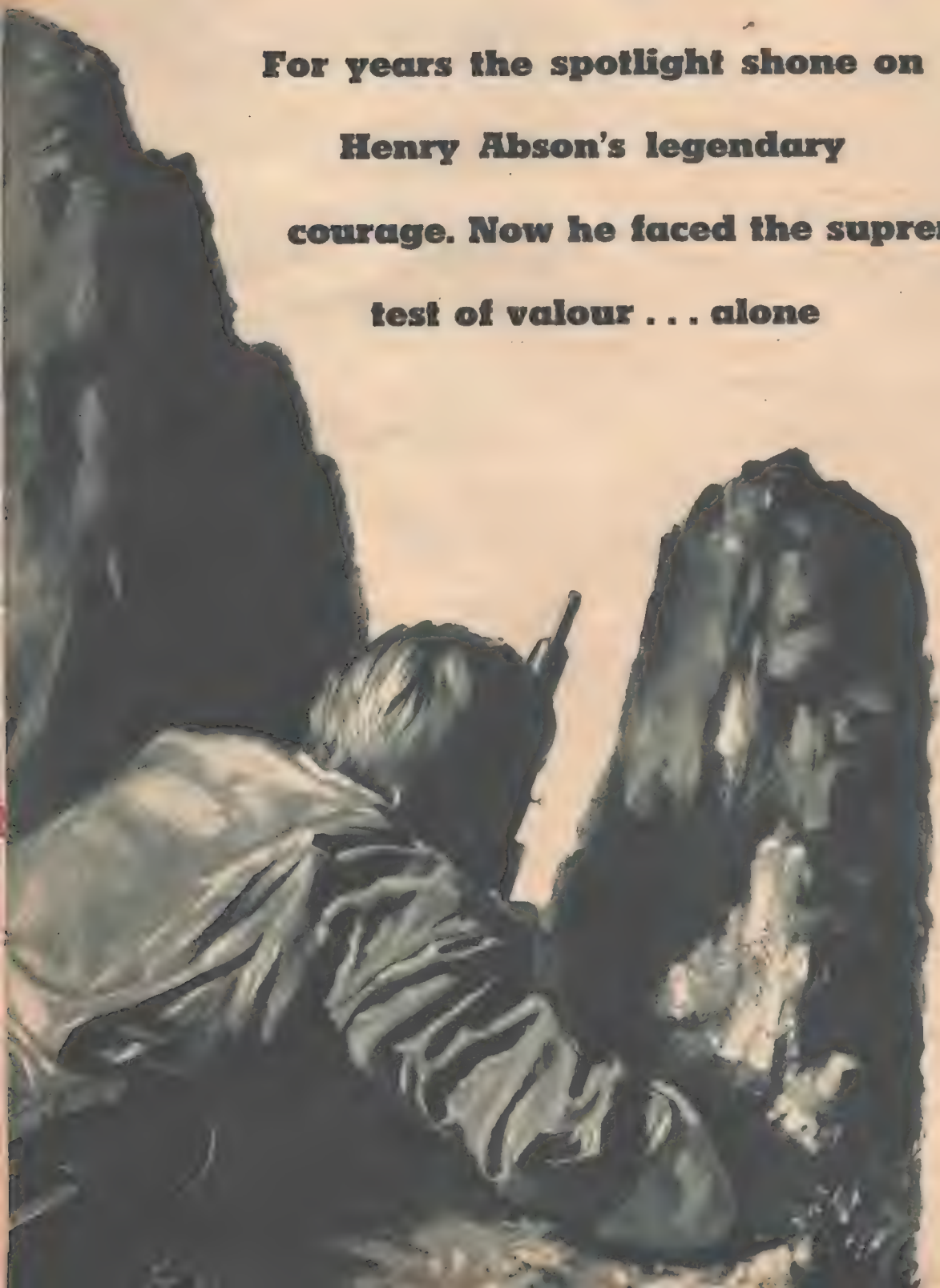
Samuel Johnson

Skirmish at El Tadla

by **WILLIAM ELLIOT**

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN BERRY

For years the spotlight shone on Henry Abson's legendary courage. Now he faced the supreme test of valour . . . alone



THE jeep ran out of petrol just after midday, when Abson had almost reached the village. El Tadla lay a thousand yards ahead and two hundred feet below him in its shallow saucer, a white-walled rectangle of flat-topped houses with four water towers marking the angles.

Beyond the village, its macadam glazed in the sun, the road to Bou-Saäda curved away to the southern horizon where the first peaks of the Ouled Naïl range rode pinkly above the haze. Three miles down the road was Abson's destination—the white huts which formed Father Lormand's medical missionary settlement.

There was something peculiar about the road which Abson, his eyes flinching from the glare, took some seconds to decipher. The telegraph poles were down.

The sight was common enough. Communications were being cut all over Algeria by flying commandos of *fellagha*, members of the so-called National Liberation Army. A few hours later the authorities sent out repair gangs and all was quiet for several weeks. It was a nuisance, but not very serious. The region was classified as a "safe" area, where news of the massacres in the north reverberated like the disquieting but harmless sound of distant bombardment.

Abson switched his glasses to the village. Nothing, not a dog, was moving there, which was not to be wondered at during the siesta hour. The air was so still that the two spirals of smoke which rose from El Tadla seemed motionless and solid, like gigantic black stems.

Half-way up the main street was Abson's immediate objective—the petrol station. Its two pumps showed up startlingly yellow in the sun. He turned to the jeep and pulled the jerrican from the back seat. After a moment's hesitation, remembering the road, he eased the Sten gun from its rack above the steering column and slipped the reserve magazine into the pocket of his bush shirt. Then, with the gun slung on his right shoulder and swinging the can in his left hand, he started walking towards the village.

Henry Abson was one of the very few Englishmen settled in Algeria. He had been attracted to the country when he first saw it in the winter of 1942, as a young officer serving in a battalion of General Anderson's First Army. After the war he had resigned his commission and returned to it. Algeria meant much more than a living to Abson. It was a physical and psychological hideout where he could drown the memory of what

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had been, since his boyhood, the great love and the great repulsion of his life—the British Army.

To the handful of French doctors, engineers and civil servants which comprised the little settlement of Selmane, ten miles north of El Tadla, where Abson had his farm, he was known merely as *l'Anglais*: the Englishman. Nobody at Selmane called him "V.C. Abson," the hateful label by which he had been known to every officer and man in two brigades and the whole of the Second Tactical Air Force. The nickname had been affectionate and admiring, but Abson had only felt, and could never forget, its bitter irony.

He had never won the Victoria Cross; had never even been recommended for it. Henry Abson, as he himself grimly knew, was not naturally a courageous man.

But there had been three V.C.s in the Abson family. Sixty years after his grandfather had won the decoration in the Indian Mutiny, Abson's father, and then his uncle, were awarded it in the Great War. Three V.C.s in two generations was something unique in British military history, and Abson's relatives, during his impressionable years, let what had been a romantic coincidence grow into a family tradition. With the outbreak of war in 1939, when he had just joined his father's old regiment, tradition for Abson became terrifying reality. He was condemned to be brave.

ABSON'S efforts to win the Victoria Cross might have been sublime. Because they were so obviously deliberate, they were almost absurd. Though continually and hysterically afraid, he went out of his way to take fantastic and unjustifiable risks. If a minefield could be avoided, Abson walked through it. He personally, and unnecessarily, attacked tanks with grenades.

Inevitably, the exalted state of self-sacrifice into which he forced himself led in due course to a nervous boasting. It was after the landings in Sicily that he became known definitely as "V.C. Abson."

When the war ended, his ambition was still unfulfilled. He won the Military Cross at Catania, and a bar to it in the Normandy battles. Both decorations were for acts of great bravery, but the opportunity for a long-sustained, progressive and apparent act of courage—the minor epic for which the Victoria Cross is more usually awarded—never came his way.

He had one last chance in the Ardennes fighting early in 1945. There, near Bastogne, due entirely to his own leadership, two of his battalion's companies fought their way out of a ring of German armour in which it would have been perfectly honourable to surrender. In recognition of this he was awarded the D.S.O.

The return of peace found Captain Abson a beaten man. The painful concentration on one increasing purpose, which had at once sustained and ravaged him for more than five years, collapsed in a debris of self-pity and a searing sense of victimization. The army and its associations grew to be unbearable. He was, perhaps, when he resigned his commission in 1947, the most decorated junior officer in the British forces, but in his own eyes he was nothing but a dupe and a failure.

It had needed so little for him to think otherwise. If some officer of higher rank had witnessed the action near Bastogne on that wintry morning ten years before, and found time to remember and report it, Abson would not have been walking towards El Tadla, with the beginning of a creeping nausea rising in his stomach.

After a few minutes Abson stopped, suddenly struck by a silence more portentous than the usual midday torpor of an Algerian village in high summer.

He put up the glasses again and this time, as the focus gripped his eyes, he saw movement in a house on the near side of the village. A little figure, grey and amorphous, bobbed into the sun from the shade of the courtyard, staggered slightly and lurched back into shadow before Abson could give it a name. He began to scan El Tadla carefully, traversing the binoculars round the perimeter and up and down the streets.

Nothing. Nor was there anything in sight in the country behind him. The road to Bou Saâda was still empty. But Abson knew better than to be reassured by the apparent emptiness of the desert. The plain was split by narrow ravines, gullies and the dry courses of *oueds*, a system of invisible fissures where a battalion of men could move about unseen.

For the first time that day he remembered what an officer of the Foreign Legion post at Bou Saâda had told him a week before—that it was thought by the French that the *fellagha* were about to switch their policy of reprisals towards the south. It was a disagreeable memory, and it made Abson want to turn back there and then to Selmane and the safety of his farm, leaving the jeep to take care of itself. But Father Lormand was expecting him at the hospital.

That Abson had been more or less content during the difficult years he had lived in Algeria was largely due to the Benedictine priest, though Abson would have been hard put to it to say what they had in common. The fact remained that the Englishman admired Father Lormand more than any man he had ever met.

Perhaps it was because, early on, before the relationship ripened to something deeper, the Frenchman had listened with sympathy to Abson's account of what happened to him during the war. His verdict, when the painful story came to an end, implied that Abson's career in the army had been a success, and not an absurd masquerade. His few dry comments, without wholly eradicating it, did a great deal to diminish the sense of failure which Abson had thought he would carry for the rest of his life.

For his part, the priest liked the sturdy, fair-haired Englishman, valuing him as someone serious and loyal on whose help he could count in the many emergencies of a busy life. Abson did his best to live up to the other's reliance on him. He gave the priest practical help, such as bringing in surgical patients from the outlying villages, or finding space in his farm lorries for drugs from Algiers.

The surgeon-priest had taught him how to administer the simple anaesthetics, and to make himself generally useful in the operating theatre. Today, Father Lormand was counting on his help for an appendix case, and Abson meant to be there.

Without unhitching it from his shoulder, he cocked the Sten. He took out the Webley service revolver that hung at his hip, broke it, spun the chambers and replaced it in the holster. He was now standing on the rim of the crater in which El Tadla lay. He looked behind him once more, picked up the jerrican and stepped carefully down the track, feeling his way on the shaley surface.

He reached the bottom of the slope and stepped warily across the apron of waste ground which led to the nearest houses. The silence of the place was now alarming, for there was desolation in it. He stopped and stood still, bitterly fighting the imperious urge to turn his back and run.

Then, looking slowly to his right, he saw the arm.

It was a brown, naked arm, drooping languidly from the ground-floor window of a house about twenty yards away. The sight of it reassured Abson. He recalled how the Arabs, taking their siesta by a window, were wont to hang their arms across a sill.

Walking carefully towards the house he shouted loudly once, and once again; but no head rose above the arm. This was peculiar, for whoever owned the arm was manifestly awake. It shook spasmodically every now and then, as if the body under it twitched in little convulsions—the very movements of a dozing man being pestered by flies.

Abson watched the arm intently as he approached, but other things caught the corner of his eye. One of the columns of smoke he had seen issued from a house half-way up the main street, to his left. The walls were blackened there, and what might have been bundles of rags lay untidily in the gutter.

He reached the house and went in, lifting the heavy sacking which hung from the doorless opening of a courtyard. The first thing he saw was the body of a donkey: on it two vultures were squatting. They lifted their pale, indignant eyes to Abson, and he understood with disgust the small movement he had noted a few minutes earlier.

They shuffled off ponderously as he swiped at them with the Sten, and he paid them no further attention. He had become aware of a sound. It came, as far as he could judge, from the room where the arm was hanging.

It cost Abson a great deal to take the six steps to the door and peer in, his finger curled round the Sten's trigger. The man whose arm he had seen lay on a stringed bed by the window. He was dead. Crouching across his shoulders and chest was a large yellow dog which raised its muzzle to Abson in a crinkled snarl.

He shot at the red mouth and saw the dog flinch, then loll down slowly. Thereafter, had he ever been able to tell the story, Abson could not have said if events lasted five minutes or as many hours.

ONCE back in the sunshine, he reeled round the village in a state of vigilant nightmare. His fear was as real and stickily present as the copious sweat that darkened his shirt and pricked his eyes, but a numbed corner of his mind insisted that this could not be happening to him. Apart from the vultures and the yellow dog there was no living thing in El Tadla.

Abson had heard and read of this new form of terrorism. It was not enough any longer to execute a man suspected of loyalty to the French. His whole village had to die—its men, women and children; its cattle and poultry and sheep. Not a cat was to be left alive.

He knew this, and knew therefore what he would find in every house and yard he entered. Yet he went on methodically, exploring the village to its smallest corner and collecting horror as he went.

In the course of his progress he reached the petrol station. It had been pillaged, and its pumps were empty. The fact did not matter, for Abson by that time hardly remembered his reason for coming to El Tadla. He had already dropped the jerrican and forgotten it.

On the baked clay of the football ground on the western outskirts, he found the scene of the main massacre. The men, as was the terrorists' custom, had been murdered first. The others, women and children, had been dealt with later. Abson reconstructed the events automatically, standing stupidly in the sun. His sense of time

A MEAL TO REMEMBER

by Ursula Bloom

A FEW years before the war my husband helped to organize a national ballot on the chances of maintaining peace. Later, a banquet was held, but only the organizers were invited. I was furious, and I determined to go.

The banquet was held at the Florence Restaurant, Piccadilly. Luckily I knew the manager, and asked if he would let me be a waitress for the evening. He agreed.

When my husband was changing into evening dress, I was at the Florence in frilly apron and white cap. There were about thirty guests—I knew at least half of them—and was sure that I would be recognized immediately.

With my fair hair tucked well back and my cap well down, I picked up my tray loaded with hors d'oeuvres. My husband, sitting next to a lady with an ear trumpet, was too engrossed to notice that I was serving him.

The next course was soup, followed by a delicious-smelling crab soufflé. I was not even recognized when one lady whom I knew called me back to complain that she had a smaller portion than her neighbour.

By the time entrée and chicken were served I was still unrecognized. After the next course—a trifle—the head waiter suggested that if I wanted my husband to look at me I should ask him: "Some more wine, sir?"

I did. My husband looked up, dropped his spoon and stared speechless. I was almost back at the service door when he boomed in his best quarter-deck voice: "Waitress!" He had come to—but I had fled.

It was Viscount Cecil, the chairman, who sent for me. He made me sit with them for coffee, and I was called upon to make a speech.

The week after the banquet I received a statuette of a waitress, with the names of the organizers of the ballot inscribed on the base. A note accompanied it: "Please accept this to remember a banquet which went with a bang."

How to make Crab Soufflé

Ingredients: 1 medium-sized cooked crab, ¼ pint milk, 3 dessertspoons flour, 2 oz. cream, 2 eggs and 2 extra egg whites, 1 oz. butter, pepper, cayenne pepper, salt, pinch of nutmeg, 2 oz. grated Parmesan cheese.

Melt the butter in a pan, and add the heated milk and flour, stirring constantly. Add the edible meat extracted from the shell and claws of the crab. Stir in the cheese. Season. Mix in the cream and the beaten egg yolks. Heat over the flame, stirring all the time, but do not allow to boil after the eggs have been added. Leave to cool. Just before putting into the oven stir in the four beaten egg whites.

Fill a buttered soufflé dish with the mixture to within an inch of the top. Put in a hot oven—Regulo 8—which has been heated for at least ten minutes. Cook for about fifteen minutes, and serve.

had long since ceased to operate, as in someone who had been concussed. Even the sense of danger was atrophied.

Eventually he moved off, carrying the Sten at his right hip and the Webley in his left hand. He was vaguely aware that this gesture of defiance was meaningless; if any of the raiders had stayed in the village he would have been attacked already, and from behind. But the grip on the two weapons braced him, if only because it tensed the shaking of his hands.

He was still holding the gun and the revolver, but there was no clear thought in his head—befuddled as he was with heat and the pathos of what he had seen—when he reached the end of his round. This was a corner building on the eastern extremity of El Tadla, and Abson knew the place. The long ground-floor room, which served as a forge and stable, was one he had often visited with Father Lormand.

It was there, as he ducked wearily under the usual curtain of sacking, that he at last found something which was alive—a horse.

He recognized it at once as one of the two Arabs Father Lormand kept at the settlement and on which he rode round the villages, visiting his patients.

The sight of it revived all Abson's lucidity and completely restored his nerve. It was obvious what had happened. The priest had sent the stallion over to be shod—Abson noticed that its near hind hoof was shoeless—and the groom had either escaped when the *fellagha* arrived, or had been surprised and killed with the rest.

He had no answer to the question why the raiders left the horse in El Tadla. Why they had spared it was no mystery for, next to a rifle or machine gun, a horse was the thing they valued most. In any case, its presence told Abson one thing: the *fellagha* would be coming back.

The forge was in disorder. The bellows were slashed and the furnace overturned. Abson brushed his hand over the scattered ashes and found them warm. But the priest's Spahi saddle was there, hanging neatly on an iron spike.

If only he had visited the forge earlier, Abson thought, as he rapidly threw the saddle on the Arab's back and bent to secure the girth, he would be in Father Lormand's settlement by now, the Legion at Bou Saâda would be warned by the priest's short-wave transmitter, and the whole rounding-up operation would be in full swing, with helicopters and armoured cars.

In three minutes the saddling was done. Abson knotted the Sten gun's sling round one of the saddle bags and fixed the binoculars similarly over the other. Then he loosened the halter and led the horse into the street. It turned instantly towards the south where the familiar road led to its stable three miles away, and was already cantering when Abson swung into the saddle and felt for the swaying stirrups.

As he cleared the corner of the house and drove down the slope to the road, cutting the corner, he glanced to the north-west and saw the *fellagha*.

They were half a mile away, very distinct in the sun, their cloaks flapping as they came rapidly over the flat ground, some riding at a fast trot, others running beside the horses. Abson heard them shout and a bullet whined away near him to raise a little mushroom of dust in the sand. Abson kicked with his left heel, wrenched the reins to the right and sent the Arab at full gallop into the scrub.

He decided not to use the road. It wound down the steep slope in a series of hairpin bends for two miles before reaching the foot of the plateau, where it ran out straight to Bou Saâda across the plain. It was by taking the straight line which was the shortest distance that Abson meant to reach the settlement and Father Lormand.

The going was rough, strewn with rocks and pitted like a sponge with holes, but the Arab faced it staunchly as he leaped the ditches and slid sprawling down the banks and screes. More bullets struck near.

Looking behind, Abson had time to gauge the situation as he fled. The mounted *fellagha* were galloping, some twenty of them shaken out into a ragged line. They were converging on him from his right at an angle of forty-five degrees, and he knew that, if he held his course, they would cut him off before he reached the third hairpin on the road below.

He accepted the fact dispassionately, not even surprised to realize that for once in his life he was unafraid. Safety lay to the east. By turning left, away from the *fellagha*, with his long start and the good horse under him, he could reach Selmane.

But straight on, if he could reach the settlement, meant warning Father Lormand. Abson went straight on.

The pace was all out. The Arab, fired by Abson's furious urging, raged down the hill in a fan of leaping stones and dust. Abson leaned far forward, his hands well up the horse's neck. The wind poured past him, flecking his face with lather dashed like spume from the flying mane. Above the saddle's creak and the rattle of the hoofs he heard the weird whining of the ricochets.

Coming in obliquely, lost for the moment in the folds of the ground but always reappearing, the *fellagha* closed the gap. Abson could see them distinctly as they flogged their horses across the contour of the hill. Three of them, bolder riders or better mounted, were taking the gradient more steeply and Abson knew then that he would never reach the plain.

With that knowledge came two thoughts. One was that, if he could not warn Father Lormand, his Arab could. The other reminded him that a short distance ahead was the *oued* of El Ain.

El Ain was a deep ravine with vertical sides, about a mile long, which followed the axis of the road. Abson would enter it at its shallow root, but for the *fellagha* approaching from his right its only access was a narrow track, almost a funnel, where horses and men must pass in single file. Properly sited, and with enough ammunition, a man alone could delay a battalion there for an hour. Abson needed less than that.

His plan was clear in every detail when he pounded over the second bend in the road and plunged in a cascade of pebbles to the temporary safety of El Ain. Two hundred yards in front, its entry marked against the skyline by a pair of jagged rocks, was the track down which the *fellagha* would come.

The angle was narrowing fast. Just before he dropped into the ravine Abson had noticed a single horse outstripping the others—a bright chestnut which covered the hill in leaping bounds. He guessed that he had less than five minutes to spare.

Once under cover, he reined in with a brutal jerk which brought the Arab to its haunches. He threw himself off and quickly stripped the gun and binoculars from the saddle bags. Then, with one arm through the reins, he pulled his notebook from his pocket, drew its pencil from the sheath and scrawled eight words across the paper. "El Tadla attacked. *Fellagha* approaching. Warn Legion. Abson."

He tore off the sheet and with one stroke of his heavy knife pinned it deeply in the soft leather of the saddle's croupe. Then, having knotted the reins and crossed the stirrups, he turned the dancing, white-mouthed horse towards the south. He picked up a dry branch from the ground and struck two vicious blows on its quarters. It reared once, then its head went down and it stretched out in full gallop down the gully.

Abson retrieved the Sten and the binoculars. Turning left, he ran two hundred yards forward, climbing as he went, till he was almost opposite the path where the *fellagha* would appear.

There, behind a square boulder, he decided to make his stand. He made his preparations rapidly, breathing deeply to steady his racing heart. He drew the Webley, cocked the Sten and wedged it snugly in a crevice, laying the reserve magazine nearby. With fifty-six rounds, and six in the revolver, Abson was confident he could play his part.

All, now, depended on the Arab. It was already out of sight, hidden by an elbow in the gully. Presently, galloping out of the far end of El Ain, it would be visible on the plain, with just over a mile to go.

Abson wriggled down more comfortably. He planted his elbows in the shale and cradled the Sten to his shoulder. The range, he judged, was less than thirty yards.

In the ninety seconds before the first *fellagha* came, every battle he had ever been in raced past Abson's mind like landscape seen from a train. And as the memory of each receded, to be taken by another, each posed the wondering question: on all those occasions he had been afraid, so why was he not afraid now?

The answer came only with the last moment of his time, as he dropped his cheek to the haft of the Sten, his finger nibbling at the trigger. It was, he knew suddenly, that during the war he had been brave for himself under the cheap impulsion of falsified honour and for the trumpery kudos of his absurd "V.C." Now, for the first time in his life, he must be brave for others.

The conviction of the truth came as a liberation. He felt amazingly relieved, as if the taste of ashes had faded from his mouth.

Then the door of the rocks above him was filled, and the first horse began its slither down the shale. It was the big chestnut. Abson saw its rider, his long rifle held like a lance, scanning the gully. The horse came down, humped and sliding. Abson waited till two more were committed to the path. When all three were in enfilade, he squeezed the trigger very gently in a four-second burst.

Forty minutes later Abson had no more rounds for the Sten, and but a single one for the Webley.

The fight, for him, was nearly over, but for others it was just beginning. Three times, during brief lulls, he had had time to take a quick look through binoculars at what was happening at the settlement. He had seen the Arab gallop across the plain and its arrival at the mission. He had seen a figure, which might have been the priest's, run out to hold it and, half an hour later, the dust of the armoured cars racing up the road from Bou Saâda. He had even seen, as a dot of thistledown in the white sky, the helicopter coming up, but he doubted if it would arrive in time for him.

He was surrounded now. After he had unhorsed seven of them in the gully, the *fellagha* changed their tactics, and Abson knew they were stalking him through the rocks behind.

He waited patiently, quite at peace and with only the faintest regret that, once more, there would be no witnesses.

The big Sikorsky helicopter was clearly visible now, and he could hear its metallic stuttering. Abson supposed that it would drop its men on the flat ground above El Ain to take the enemy in the rear.

As the sound from the air became enormous, ringing in the gully, a bullet struck the rock and Abson fired his final shot at the horseman who dashed down the path in front. Then, clubbing his Sten, he rose and turned to meet the two men, their long knives raised, who sprang at him from the rear. The last thing he saw, as Sten and knives came down together, was the Sikorsky reeling away above him.

FATHER LORMAND never told the French Military Intelligence the real truth about what the papers in Paris called "a skirmish at El Tadla": how the sweating stallion had galloped into the stable yard with Abson's warning stuck on the saddle; or how the Legion had been given time to occupy the mission and engage the fifty-strong band of *fellagha* in the *oued* of El Ain.

Nevertheless, the men in the helicopter must have said something, for the post in Bou Saâda gave Abson a military funeral in the little cemetery behind the mission. The settlement at Selmane contributed towards the cost of a headstone.

The headstone took some time to arrive. When it did, it proved to be a dignified block of close-grained Atlas granite, with no other inscription but Abson's name and the years of his birth and death. Its simplicity pleased Father Lormand; he had been stoically prepared for militant angels, or the Union Jack carved in low and coloured relief.

On the evening of the day the stone was put in place, the priest went out to the cemetery with hammer and chisel. No stonemason, he was scarcely proud of what he achieved after two hours of dusty, tongue-biting work. One of the arms of the "V" was clearly askew, and the curve of the "C" could have been more graceful.

Still, the initials were recognizable. And anyway, Father Lormand reflected as he walked back to the mission, very few people who saw them would know their significance.

But Abson would. THE END

© *William Elliot, 1958*

"How do they feel, sir?"

COMPLIMENTS—4

Whenever a man's friends begin to compliment him about looking young, he may be sure they think he is growing old.

Washington Irving

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A Friendly Hand	Weakening
Mankind's Millstone	A Bit Steep
Speeches, Speeches, Speeches	He Gritted His Teeth And
Hammer Of Communism	In The Pavilion
The Restless Ocean	Sonny's Girl-friend
To Stop The Bloodshed	On Sunday
Lush Living	Like A Movie Star
That Channel Tunnel	Old Faithful
Everywhere You Go	In Honeysuckle Cottage

Last six Examples are incomplete: if you wish to use one, first complete it with a word of your choice—then make your Bullet as above.

.....For France	A Sinister.....
When Nobody's.....	With All Her.....
Driving ..... Crazy	Made The.....Jump

EXAMPLE .....

BULLET .....

EX. .....

B. .....

EX. .....

B. .....

EX. .....

B. .....

EX. .....

B. .....

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Ten Prizes of £2 10s. and 1,600 other awards have also been posted. (The £100 TV EXTRA was won by Mrs. D. Emm of Wolverton.)

RULES 1. First Prize for best Bullet received; others in order of merit. The test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all Bullets received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. at the rate of 6d. per Bullet. Fee submitted will be taken to cover Bullets in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL dated August 16), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, August 2, for early news of No. 2,150 result.)

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